

\*----- ST REPORT INTERNATIONAL ONLINE MAGAZINE -----\*

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> 11/27/92 STR 847 "The Original \* Independent \* Online Magazine!"

- The Editor's Desk - WHATIS 6.4 OUT! - PGST (UK) PATCH  
- PEOPLE ARE TALKING - NVN ANNOUNCED! - SPORTSTER & DS  
- CRYSTAL BALL RETURNS! - ATARI IS DEAD? - TWENTY QUESTIONS  
- FONTVERTER REVIEW - FONT # REFERENCE - STR Confidential

-\* EXCLUSIVE! -> INSIDE COMDEX'92 \*-

-\* DOUBLE CLICK SHUTS DOWN! \*-

-\* ATARI WINS ONE! \*-

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ST REPORT INTERNATIONAL ONLINE MAGAZINE

The Original \* Independent \* Online Magazine

-\* FEATURING WEEKLY \*-

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WHAT'S NEW IN THE ATARI FORUMS (November 27)

GTHOR - ONE OF THE WORLD'S BEST OTHELLO PROGRAMS

Download file GTHOR.LZH from LIBRARY 2 of the Atari Arts Forum (GO ATARIARTS) for GTHOR 2.0, an Othello program that is considered one of the four top Othello programs in the world. If you think you're good at Othello, try this program!

STALKER STUFFR BACKTALK UTILITY

Download file STKSTRU.ZIP from LIBRARY 2 of the Atari Productivity Forum (GO ATARIPRO) for "STalker Stuffr", a utility for use with STalker3 desk accessory. Use with CLI or Hotwire to automate Stalker tasks. Run a BackTALK script without opening the Stalker window. Create HotWire LGR entries for STalker DA sessions.

MIDI MUSIC MAKER

Version 2.21 of Midi Music Maker is now available in LIBRARY 5 of the Atari Arts Forum (GO ATARIARTS) as file MMM221.LZH. This program plays 16 different types of music including SMF. It also will create SMF format 0 or 1 from any of the types played. New features include ability to play Dr. Ts (Atari or Amiga) and Sound Blaster CMF files, full screen file display, user definable keys, selectable drum tracks when transposing and several other new features and fixes.

VERSION 6.4 of WHATIS

Version 6.4 of WHATIS is now available for download from LIBRARY 6 of the Atari Productivity Forum (GO ATARIPRO) as file WHATIS.ARC. This version identifies over 125 file types - ARCs, LHarcs, PRGs, pics, ACCs, animations, etc... no more "what kind of file is this?" problems! Runs as a PRG or ACC or a TTP-like program on any ST/TT in any rez. Short docs included in the ARC. All the features of previous versions, plus adds PageStream 2.2 docs and LaserJet II soft fonts to the list.

#### PAGESTREAM PATCH

A patch to convert PageStream 2.1 (UK) to PageStream 2.2 (UK) is available for download as file UKPATC.ARC from LIBRARY 11 of the Atari Vendors Forum (GO ATARIVEN). This is equivalent to the US version of the patch which creates PageStream 2.2 (US). The UK version of PageStream has the word 'color' spelled as 'colour' in the Global menu.

#### SIMPLY LOADING XTERM2 ONTO PORTFOLIO!

Download XLOAD.ZIP from LIBRARY 2 of the Atari Portfolio Forum (GO APORTFOLIO) for a small program and batch file to simplify first time loading of xterm2 onto your Portfolio through the serial port. The batch file is run from your PC and copies xload.com across to your Portfolio. Xload.com is then run from your Portfolio to copy xterm2 across. The batch file contains further instructions and the program has a number of error trapping routines. NB. The zip file does not contain xterm2 itself - this can be downloaded separately from library 2.

#### ULTIMATE ADDRESS BOOK!

The ultimate Address Book for the PC! Reads and edits Portfolio compatible Address Book files. Advanced features! Commercial Quality! Written and uploaded by Artisan Software. Even dials the modem for you... just like the Portfolio dials over the speaker! Requires DOS-PC. Save feature disabled until registered.

Download file ADR\_BK.ZIP from LIBRARY 6 of the Atari Portfolio Forum (GO APORTFOLIO).

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> From the Editor's Desk                            "Saying it like it is!"

Here we are a week or so after Comdex and what do we find going on? People are still discussing the pros and cons of Atari's performance at Comdex. Odd... don't you think? When all one need do is use one's eyes. After all, seeing is believing. There is strange word, (believe) right in the middle of the word is a (lie)! More smoke and mirrors? Maybe. Back

to the topic. Atari's performance and Comdex is indicative of the times. They've managed to disappoint the users and dealers every year since 1987 in regards to big Christmas Sales seasons. Yet we see no-one trying to make excuses for this obvious marketing blunder. Then why, in retrospect, do we find really decent people in the Atari platform try like crazy to "explain away" the rather sedate 'action' at Atari's booth this year? Granted there may have been a few thousand flyers and brochures handed out, but in the busiest of years this was never looked upon as a solid 'rule of thumb' when gauging booth attendance. Why all of a sudden do we see all sorts of reaching going on to justify the quiet booth. Biggest question of all, why are there people ever so busy trying to tell the userbase that what was seen was not really what they saw? Sound ridiculous? Sure it does but that's exactly what is going on!

Of course, there will always be the buck passing... since 1987, its never been Atari's fault or the fault of the decision makers at Atari for the dregs they've placed themselves in.... This year we are being told it was the Interface Group's fault (they organize and manage Comdex). In particular, the dismal performance at the Atari booth is being blamed on the manner in which the Sands expo center was managed. Right... why is it through the years, its never been acknowledged it could've been the fault of poor management decisions etc.. Take a few of the glaring incidents in the past for example.. The Federated Fiasco, Federated's fault - The ATW failure, "not our design" etc.. - Upgraded Portfolio design, not our design etc.. - Notebook, Pen and Stacy... all accounting for huge sums of money gone south. Yet none of these things or incidents have ever been attributed to or even hinted at being the responsibility of Atari or its management or lack of it. Nope, in the broadest of terms everybody and his brother has been blamed but never once was the real responsibility ever fixed where it really belongs.

Now we are told that "Jack is back". To that I say I've been told that a number of times in the past and still.... no real improvement. A typical strong example of strange executive reaction was the statement made by Sam Tramiel about the Forbes Article. A laugh? A joke? It was sad to see that article hit, even for me. Atari has always had a dynamite machine design but alas, its management team well.. that's another story. Now that Comdex is behind us, let's see how long it takes for the damage control smoothies to get started in trying to convince all of us that what we saw really wasn't what we saw at all.

Ralph @ STReport International Online Magazine

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STR'S "BELIEVE IT? OR.. WHAT?"  
<>#####<>

"There is no comparison! The Atari Falcon  
is far superior to the PC platform."

Sam Tramiel, 08/92

"As I said before, all marketing announcements will be made at Duesseldorf. I will not comment on future models of the Falcon.

WE ARE TALKING TODAY ABOUT A MACHINE.....  
WHICH WILL BE SHIPPING NEXT WEEK."

Sam Tramiel, 08/92

"I've just returned from Asia, where I saw the first Atari Falcon production coming off the lines. Let's hope this new offering will make it in North America. I know that the specs are great."

Sam Tramiel, 08/92

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> ONLINE WEEKLY STReport OnLine

The wires are a hummin'!

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PEOPLE... ARE TALKING

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On CompuServe

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compiled by Joe Mirando

Well folks, Thanksgiving has been here and gone, the Christmas shopping season has now officially begun, and the echoes of COMDEX are slowly fading away. While Atari's Falcon030 will be relegated to the "if only they were available now" department during the upcoming Christmas season, the questions, answers, and discussions regarding the ST/TT series of computers continue at a steady pace. Reading these messages can be fun, informative, and interesting. Sometimes you even get a "blast from the past"... a message that reminds you of a problem, question, of triumph you've had and long since forgotten about. This doesn't always happen, but sometimes... Well, you know.

From The Atari Productivity Forum

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Oscar Steele of Purple Mountain Computing (PMC) posts:

"The \$399 price on the Freedom Floptical Drives has been extended to December 15, 1992. Also, we have exciting things in store for Gemulator, look for announcements soon. Finally, we're moving our warehouse and we're having some incredible sales. A lot of stuff has sold, but a lot more is available:

Cables 'n' Things...

Function-Aid, function key template holder (fits next to Function Key spot on your ST) includes 5 double sided cards to write down the functions for different programs. - \$3

Baseless Joystick - uses liquid inside so that it doesn't need a base. Move it in the air by moving it towards the direction you want to go!

- \$3

3 Floppy Drive cables - \$4 each

3 TV Hookup things - screw to TV antenna - \$1 each

2 Computer hookup to TV Hookup thing - \$1 each

Video Cable for TT computer - \$14 TT modem cable - \$9 25 pin male centronics to 25 pin male centronics cable - \$4 RS-232 cable - \$6 Power Cords - \$3 each (plug in almost universally to all computer components)

Gravis Mousestick - Awesome, joystick or a mouse, has LCD screen for displaying controls and information. A steal at \$39.

1040 ST keyboard covers, simulated leather - \$3 each

External drive cover, simulated leather - \$2"

Well, remember that bit of nostalgia I was talking about? The Function\_Aid was produced by a friend of mine. I had one of the first ones made. I haven't used it in a long time, but reading that made me stop and think: "Hey! I paid fifteen dollars for that darned thing!" Hey, I didn't say that it was profound or anything, just that it brought back memories.

Speaking of memories, Richard Gunter asks about John Townsend's TOS version doc:

"A few weeks ago, someone (John Townsend?) uploaded a document file which summarized the TOS versions released for Atari ST line. I let it go by when it appeared, and now can't find it. Can you help?"

Bill Aycock, Sysop extraordinare, points Richard in the right direction:

"John Townsend's text file is included in the TOSPAT.LZH file in LIB 6, if you don't mind downloading a little extra stuff... the LZH contains the text file plus the latest version of the patches mentioned in his note (plus a couple others that have been reported to work better than the official Atari patches)."

While most of these "patches" are actually enhancements and not patches at all, a few of them are necessary to keep certain TOS versions from making your life harder. Check them out when you can.

While some of us are concerned with software, others are currently involved in weighing the virtues of certain types of hardware. Shawn Laughlin tells us:

"I'm thinking about purchasing a printer for my computer and need a little advice on them. My last printer was an Okidata model (or whatever) and I don't want anything that even resembles it. It took about an hour to print a 30 page document and it wore out the head.

Do most printers work with all types of computers? My brother has an IBM clone and purchased a Hewlett Packard Desk Jet 500 for about \$400. I like the printer but don't know if it will work with my 520 ST.

Any advice on printers (and where I can purchase them) in the \$400 price range would be appreciated. I want either an ink jet or laser printer capable of printing large documents(in length) without burning up <g>. Also exactly what I will need as far as hardware and software interface."

One of the leading luminaries in the Atari Forums, Albert Dayes of Atari Explorer Magazine, tells Shawn:

"Provided you have the right cable and correct printer drive you should be able to hook up any printer to your computer. The DeskJet is a popular and quite a few people use them on their Atari STs. Also it appears that most major applications have drivers for the printer as well. Probably gives you the best price/performance of most printers out there."

Richard Gunter advises Shawn:

"Most of the current line of printers that work on the PC clones will also work on an Atari, I believe with the same cable you'd use on an old AT-class PC. The trick is to make sure you have printer drivers for the software and printer combination you choose. That's critical.

HP makes a well-regarded line of inkjet and laser printers, and the prices have come down a lot in recent years. In a local store, I saw the HP 500C color inkjet advertised for \$400 less than a week ago. Their Laserjet line has several models, with the "P" (for personal) models costing rather less than the bigger ones. Dunno if they'd be down in your price range, though.

I have the impression that the inkjets are also kinda slow compared to the lasers, but you shouldn't burn up the animal in either case. It's possible an inkjet would be fast enough for you, but I'll defer to those who have them. Beware of "raw" pages/minute figures, though; the software will usually have a dramatic effect on the effective throughput.

I have an Atari SLM804 that's given excellent service for about six years now (out of production), and have heard good reports on the SLM605. Neither is compatible with other platforms, though, and may still be a bit pricey in view of the falling prices around the marketplace.

Good luck, and don't forget the printer drivers!"

Bill Gibson proves that the "Global Village" is here already. Being able to communicate with someone so far away in so short a time is something that could only be dreamed of only a decade ago. So was the idea of linking STs with PCs and Macs. Well I guess if you've got to try to kill

two birds with one stone, you had might as well try to link your ST to those poor PCs and Macs. Bill posts:

"Hello from Scotland. We have a rather complex computer setup here. An atari ST, a generic 386 PC, and a MAC Classic. Can anyone suggest how they could be networked/ ideally they would be able to share resources such the modem, plotter and printers? bye for now :)"

Again that informational dynamo, Albert Dayes from Atari Explorer Magazine helps out:

"If you download the Znet in the Atari Arts forum they had some interesting networking information in it. Products for hooking up to Novell networks and some other things. The 11/21/1992 issue of Znet. Sharing printers and a plotter can be done with printer sharing boxes that you can probably get just about anywhere. The manual switch boxes is what I am thinking about. You could probably do the same thing for the modem too since it just a serial connection."

While we're on the subject of the "Global Village", let's take a look at Lance Lenehan's problem with an Atari Megafile 30 hard drive. Lance posts:

"Hi, I hope someone might be able to help me. I have an Atari 1040STe and a Megafile 30 hard disk drive. I am having problems getting the 1040 to recognize the hard disk. I boot with the hard disk utility disk, which runs the AHDI.PRG utility, but I get no drive C: icon appearing on the desktop. I have managed to get aversion 5.0 HD utilities, and the AHDI.PRG program reports that Unit 0 Identification is unavailable. If I use the HDX program to format the hard disk, it seems to go fine up till the point where it checks for bad sectors. It then reports every sector on the disk as bad, and at the end reports that the disk was formatted with an earlier version of HDX. I have followed the instructions regarding waiting for the hard disk to power up before turning on the computer. I was running the disk successfully prior to my current problems. I have a vague suspicions that I deleted the Hard Disk Icon for Drive C: at one stage, using the Options, Install Disk Drive ... menu and selecting remove button. I was intending to remove the drive B: icon, but was a bit careless."

Jeff at Intersect Software tells Lance:

"It sounds as if you have a problem with the Drive. The MegaFile 30 uses a 30 Meg Segate RLL drive. Most of the problems I've encountered have been with the drive it'self. Seagates (the 5 1/4 drives) drives suffer from problems that result in the platter not spinning up to speed.

Listen very carefully to the drive, do you hear the initialize sounds?

If not then you can remove the case and lift up the drive, carefully spin the platter (there is a flywheel on the bottom), try it again, it will probably work. Leave the screws off the case, you will probably

need to jump start the drive again in the near future."

Lance tells Tony:

"I think I agree with you about the drive having problems. I have tried just about every utility I can get my hands on, and have had no success. Looks like I'll be taking the drive to Atari for service. Thanks for replying. Do you think its worth persevering with the megafile, or maybe purchasing another brand of drive. I am a PC programmer, ie IBM clones, and have allot of experience with the hardware/software scene as far as IBM compatibles go. As for the Atari, well I use that for recording in my home midi studio with Cubase Software. So i'm not as familiar with all the options available on the Atari as with the PC's. I live in Sydney, Australia. There dont appear to be many Atari specialists out here. I purchased my machine and drive from a large department store."

Okay folks, here's the interesting part. Tony Barker of Moving Pixels jumps in and says:

"I live in Sydney and I'm an Atari specialist, I didn't realise you were so close. Give me a call on 555 7312 and I'll see what I can do to help you out. If all else fails, I can fix you up with a new hard disk."

Hmmmm... Lance, who is from Sidney Australia, dials up CompuServe in Columbus Ohio in the the good ol' U.S. of A. and finds that someone there can help him and also happens to live in Sidney. Sidney to Ohio to Sidney... hey was this info delivered by the postal service? ;-)

From the Atari ST Arts Forum

Did Noah really have a ZOO in his ARC? Did he build that ARC with a ZIP in his step? Who cares? Is a ZOO better than an ARC? Well that's a tough question. ARC has been the top method of compression for the ST series of computers for some time now, although LZH in the LH5 format is also a favorite. Now along comes this new method; ZIP. It archives some types of files smaller than LZH or ARC, some end up larger. The current version of ZIP for the ST (2.00) provides a nice user interface which eliminates the need for "shell" programs to insulate you from all of the "command line nonsense". To make matters worse, there is yet another option on the not-to distant horizon: ZOO. What do people think of these new methods? Do you remember those Tropicana Twister commercials? Bob Retelle, another top-notch Sysop, tells Bob Ledbetter:

"One thing I often do when I find a program that's been compressed with some obscure compression method is to re-compress it with ARC before uploading it here, just to make it easier for everyone to get it..

You might think about trying that if the sysop on the BBS decides the

uncompressed version are taking up too much space or download time.. almost everyone should have an unARC utility, and be familiar with its use..

(The one recent exception was the 56001 DSP assembler I uploaded into the AtariPro Forum.. it was ZOOed, and I would have re-ARCed it except that it has multiply sub-folders in it, and ZOO handles that nicely.. once you figure out how to do it..)"

John Amsler jumps into the conversation and posts:

"Even though it's not as "efficient" as LZH, I've found over the six years that I've had my 1040ST and MegaSTe, from TOS 1.02 (?) to 2.06, that ARC creates far, far fewer problems than anything else. There seems to be a much greater degree of cross-platform compatibility with ARC (Macintosh, Amiga, Atari, IBM, and whatever else)."

Sysop Bob Retelle tells John:

"You're absolutely right...!"

While some of those more "esoteric" compression methods might be able to squeeze a few more bytes out of an archive, I've always found good old ARC to be the easiest to use, and a lot less confusing for new users... (There's some new compression for the PC from the Netherlands that's supposed to be even better than ZIP.. but totally incompatible with anything, of course.. I just hope it doesn't start catching on with isolated BBSs.. what a mess...!)"

John Amsler replies:

"<"...what a mess...!>

Mess: that's an underStatement! It's too bad there can't be juST one compression STandard. Sometimes I think there's a conspiracy to deliberately keep the four main platforms (IBM, Apple, Commodore, Atari) segregated. If anything, I would think the manufacturers would actually benefit from having cross-platform compatibility."

From the Atari Vendors Forum  
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Bob Ledbetter asks:

"Is there any way to import files from SuperBase Personal 2 into CardFile 4?"

Never at a loss for information, Albert Dayes tells Bob:

"If you export files from SuperBase to ascii and then there should be a converter program that works with fixed length files (ascii) to import into CardFile."

Of course, great minds think alike. Bob Ledbetter posts:

"Between the time I asked the question and read your answer I have been thinking along those lines. However, I haven't had the chance to give it a go yet. I'll try it today."

One of the most interesting items available for the ST is the SpectreGCR; a Mac emulator... or should I say THE Mac emulator (?), from Gadgets by Small. Richard Gordon asks:

"What's the story on a new version that will support system 7.1, will there be an "STTalk", and what about CDROM support (hinted at ages ago)?"

Mark at Gadgets by Small answers:

"The largest roadblock Dave has faced regarding the release of Spectre 3.1 is implementing System 7.1 support. It has been a bear but he is sounding more and more enthusiastic about finally getting up and running. However, my understanding is that the first Spectre 3.1 release will not likely support System 7. As I understand it, the probable "fixes" in the first release of Spectre 3.1 are:

TT SCSI support  
TT memory support (more than 8 megs)  
Bug fix for >4 meg machines with a  
68000 accelerator (ie, AdSpeed)

Support for System 7 will probably have to wait for Spectre 3.2? 3.3? I know of no plans for a "STTALK" type of board (I assume you mean a "MegaTalk" type of board that will fit ANY ST.) I do not know the status of any CD-ROM support."

Richard tells Mark:

"I don't want to harp on this - but a long time ago Dave indicated in a newsletter, manual, or article (I don't remember which) that ST user's would not be left out in the cold. I guess we have been. The Atari system's are undersupported by the ATARI and vendors. I do think that Dave has done a great job. The programing feat alone deserves our appreciation. I do appreciate the Mac interface on my ST and it does work well. I would like sysem 7 support, but I know our ROM's our outdated. At one time Dave was considering 256 support, but if he doesn't we will be stuck w/ the 128K roms. Anyway, I would like system 7.1 support and I would like a way to hook up a MAC CD rom,

to my ST. I am a big supporter of Dave's work - I have put my money into it - MagicSac and Spectre/GCR, I wish him well and hope that he does not forget the ST users out there that bought his product."

Mark at Gadgets replies:

"I will pass your comments and concerns along to Dave. Thank you for taking the time to provide your thoughts."

Dick Paddock jumps in and says:

"Now that someone has confirmed that the 1.44MB upgrade to my MSTE is causing my difficulty in reading GCR diskettes (I'm glad it's not just ME!), is there a solution? Spectre 3.1, perhaps?"

Mark tells Dick:

"There is already a workaround for the high density drive incompatibility problem. Before you boot into Mac mode, put a 800K SPECTRE format disk in the floppy drive. (Yes, even if you are booting into Mac mode from a hard drive). This can be any SPECTRE format disk (800K) that does NOT contain any System files. Once in Mac mode, mount the floppy (press F1) and then eject it. You should then be able to read Mac format disks (800K ones). Spectre does not yet support 1.4 meg floppies and I don't know the status of that at this time."

Meanwhile, back at CodeHead central, Domingo Alvear tells Charles F. Johnson:

"I am glad to have Warp 9! It is a great program. (Especially since it is supported unlike Turbo ST!) I also like E-O-S, but are there other modules available yet? Or have people just not read the docs? <grin> I would pay for a disk full of E-O-S modules..."

Charles, being the kind of guy who likes feedback, tells Domingo:

"Thanks for the compliments on Warp 9! I know of at least one programmer who's working on a shareware package of screensaver modules. Also, I believe that Michael Crisafulli has released a version of his 'Soft-Sci' screensaver that works as a Warp 9 module; I'll see if I can get a copy and upload it here."

Well, friends and neighbors, this is the end of a very long Thanksgiving day for me. I hope your Thanksgivings were good ones and that you have as much to be thankful for as I have. Tune in again next week and listen to what they are saying when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

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IMPORTANT NOTICE!

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STReport International Online Magazine is available every week in the ST Advantage on DELPHI. STReport readers are invited to join DELPHI and become a part of the friendly community of Atari enthusiasts there.

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> INSIDE COMDEX'92! STR Spotlight

\*\* EXCLUSIVE EYEWITNESS REPORT! \*\*

COMDEX/Fall '92  
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by John J. Amsler

I've been coming to COMDEX since I moved to Las Vegas in 1987. As the memories of COMDEXes past, e.g.,

1987 - the torrential rains, (when Atari was prominently situated in the main Convention Center)

1988 - the "Gold Room," Mick Fleetwood, and Falcon (the F-16 flight simulation!)

grow somewhat misty (if not altogether incorrect!), this year's COMDEX was certainly the most eagerly anticipated.

This frenzy of anticipation, of course, was due to the much-vaunted pre-COMDEX publicity that was generated by the unveiling of the Falcon earlier in Europe and just recently at the Boston Computer Society. It was interesting enough to read about it, to hear about it, to even see it in magazines (Atari ST User, Sep 92, page 9), but nothing could be as desirable as to see one "live," "up close," in person. I'm not a parent, but I imagine that it's somewhat similar to having been a soldier in Korea or Vietnam who received many pictures of his baby born while he was away -- nothing could compare to going home and seeing, especially holding, the child. I can't imagine any Atarian not wanting to "cuddle" Atari's "newborn" computer!

Thursday, 19 November

Once again, I found myself coming to COMDEX late in the week. Every year since 1987 I've been telling myself that I would come no later than Wednesday (the supposed "peak" of the week's activity) and every year there's been SOMETHING that's prevented me from doing so. Drats!

Having won two free passes from McGraw-Hill on CompuServe (THANKS, M-H!!), I invited a Raytheon contractor who's never been to a COMDEX to accompany me. We arrived at the registration tent at about 1230 and I only had a few hours to spare before I have to get back to Nellis Air Force Base.

I had logged onto the Las Vegas D.U.S.T. ("Dedicated Users of the ST," the local ST users' group) BBS ("Wildlife, (702)-645-7570)) the day before as well as onto CIS and saw messages saying

that Motorola had a Falcon in ITS area. GRRRREAT!! I told my friend, "We'll take a quick look around the main hall of the convention center, find the Motorola area, drool over the Falcon, and then go to the Sands Convention Center and go straight to the Atari area."

I didn't look at the exhibit map in the daily COMDEX newspaper, expecting the Motorola area to be easy to find even if we just randomly wandered around. That was a mistake; it took us quite a bit of time to find the MOTOROLA sign, but finally I saw it.

As I approached the Motorola area, I noticed the partitioned area for "Digital Signal Processing" (or whatever it was the sign said exactly). From a relatively long distance I could make out the Falcon, sitting there looking like a 1040ST with too much melanin (a pigment responsible for dark skin color).

As I approached I noticed it was playing the sound/graphics demo of the "Simply The Best" video by Tina Turner that, as it was told, wowed everybody at the Boston Computer Society show last month. I had to strain against the constant background cacophony to hear the sound coming out of the speakers that Falcon was hooked up to, but what I did hear was beautiful: sharp, crisp, undistorted (to my tone-deaf ears <g>) sound, from the "chopchopchop" of the helicopters shown to the melodies of Tina Turner's band and the harmonies of her singing. (Maybe "harmonies" is an inappropriate word, given her Rod-Stewart-like trademark scratchy voice.)

I was pretty much transfixed as I listened to the demo cycle through a couple times. I thought to myself, "Whatever the Motorola engineers did to devise this DSP ["Digital Signal Processor" -- the "sound brain" inside) chip and whatever Sam Tramiel's engineers did to merge it with the Falcon's internal hardware and firmware (?), they certainly did it RIGHT!"

Hats off to Motorola and Atari!

While I was staring at the Falcon, basically motionless while I was trying to fathom the wonder and beauty of this "baby," my friend tapped me on the left arm with a copy of the Fall 1992 issue of "68K Connection: 68000 Family News and Information," a Motorola bulletin. I looked at the index and saw the entry "Atari's Falcon030." I immediately turned to page 3 and read the following article:

#### 68030 Powers Atari's New Multimedia Computer

A multimedia computer recently introduced by Atari Corporation is powered by Motorola's 68030 microprocessor. The new computer, called Falcon030, is the industry's first personal integrated media system. The Atari Falcon030 is a full-scale computer specifically designed for personal integrated media functions including video, audio, animation, telecommunications, and graphics. Users of the Atari Falcon030 can create home videos complete with text and music, can record lead vocals on a favorite musical recording, and can execute many more exciting applications.

The Atari Falcon030 also incorporates Motorola's 56001 digital signal processor (DSP) to process and manipulate compact-disc-quality digital audio and voice signals, which, combined with the 68030's processing power and Atari's integrated software, makes the Atari Falcon 030 a complete personal integrated media system.

"The Atari Falcon030, with the help of Motorola's 68030 and 56001 DSP, is bringing production-level quality graphics, professional-level recording and audio manipulation capabilities to the consumer," said Sam Tramiel, president and CEO of Atari.

Motorola 68030 integrates advanced features into a full 32-bit microprocessor design, optimized for low-cost, memory-based applications. Its burst fill functionality provides an efficient bus and memory interface, enabling the 68030 to substantially increase overall system throughput. This capability is especially well-suited for multimedia personal integrated media products, such as the Atari Falcon030, that require large amounts of information to be continuously transmitted from external memory to the processor's dual internal caches. The efficient memory interface results in cost and time savings, allowing the Atari Falcon030 to achieve excellent price/performance ratios.

As I read it, certain words and phrases jumped out and caught my mind's eye ("virtual boldface" <g>):

industry's first  
full-scale computer  
specifically designed  
exciting applications  
compact-disc-quality  
production-quality graphics  
professional-level recording and audio manipulation  
advanced features  
optimized for low-cost  
efficient bus  
efficient memory interface  
cost and time savings  
excellent price/performance ratios

I thought to myself, "Wow!" This is like being in a time warp going back to 1984. 'Industry's first' -- where did I hear THAT said about Atari before?! It sounds like the Falcon is picking up where the ST left off, i.e., breaking new ground, boldly going where makers of electronic tin cans presumptuously calling them 'computers' fear to tread!"

My friend then handed me Atari's own Falcon brochure, also available in the Motorola area. The cover was a VERY colorful picture of a Falcon, shown from a top-down, front-oblique angle, with its uniquely-colored nameplate:

{Fuji symbol} ATARI FALCON 030

|  
v

A - blue  
T - light green  
A - orange  
R - red  
I - white

The Falcon was sitting on what appeared to be an artist's "canvas" covered with bright red, blue, and yellow paint spillings. Above the Falcon was Atari's SC1435 monitor, showing a scene from some space-oriented game, similar to the old "Star Raiders" genre. The view showed a spacecraft's instrument control panel, above which was the "windshield," through which could be seen a red hexagonal "mother ship" with green "spokes" emanating from the inside of each vertex and joining at the center. Whoever designed the cover for this brochure created a very appealing, eye-catching display. Good job!

Opening up the brochure to pages 2 and 3 showed in the lower left corner (page 3) a Falcon inside some audio/video laboratory, hooked up to a "harmonizer" (as well as some other sophisticated electronic equipment) with some sort of audio-analysis software display on the screen. On the right side of the brochure (page 3) a Falcon was shown standing on its right side, with the back to the reader, with the various ports indicated by text. The upper body of a woman dancer was shown in the upper left corner (page 2), twirling around in a pink gown against a backdrop of a brilliant pink light. She seemed to be looking at the centerfold, which was a front-view of a Falcon with a BEAUTIFUL multi (and I mean MULTI!) -colored ray-traced picture on the monitor, with:

- a white Fuji symbol with a tilted black-and-blue halo around it's "head," mirrored against the marble-like speckled surface on which it rested
- a large semi-transparent sphere, against which you could see part of the Fuji symbol reflected
- a mainly-red tetrahedron
- two mainly-blue tetrahedrons, joined at their bases
- a mainly-green dodecahedron (?)

Each of the objects would separately have been a great graphic on the old 520/1040 STs, Mega STs, STes, or Mega STes. The picture of the monitor did a GREAT job of implying the graphics capabilities of the Falcon (yet anyone who knew anything about the Falcon knew that one picture could only scratch the

surface as far as graphics are concerned!).

The back (page 4) of the brochure showed a Falcon screen shot with an open GEM window displaying the compact disk icons used with the Falcon, a multi-colored two-dimensional CAD-like graphic of a falcon, and a long list of the Falcon's technical specifications.

Again, as I read Atari's brochure, certain words and phrases jumped out:

Atari's world includes a vision  
advanced technology  
cost-effective production  
Personal Integrated Media System  
vibrant colors  
crystal-clear sound  
easily and affordably  
better-than-CD-quality  
animation studio  
multimedia production center  
unflagging helpmate  
blazingly fast  
computers other companies sell for thousands more  
state-of-the-art audio quality  
power without the price  
high-quality genlock  
titling and special effects a breeze  
high-speed graphics  
the Atari Falcon030 already includes what you need  
MS-DOS file compatibility  
386-PC emulation  
exciting new types of peripherals

Atari made the first computer to offer a built-in  
MIDI interface, which for all other computers requires  
an extra card or external box

the ultimate sound track

concert hall ambience

Professional-quality speech

Atari Falcon030 handles 8 discrete tracks at a time,  
without add-on boards or issues of compatibility

Atari Falcon030 provides the same--if not superior--  
functionality to digital recording systems costing literally  
thousands of dollars more.

astounding vibrancy

New vistas open up for the electronic artist.

Programs become more intuitive

sophisticated use of color

never seen this kind of richness before

a virtual rainbow of color

stunning PIMS

Atari Falcon030's groundbreaking capabilities

the promise of a true PIMS for the home

adding surround-sound to your VCR

interactive education

running a home security system

We don't charge more than we need to just because we can  
get away with it.

Our audience is not pinstripe clones or "blind lemmings"

powerful, efficient, cost-effective tools

the musical edge that the ST series has always had

incredible color and speed

a platform that's ready for your most challenging creative tasks

color and sound blend seamlessly

a system that can truly be any kind of personal, creative  
tool you want

There are two minor complaints I have with the brochure:

1) "standard MS-DOS file compatibility"

That may have been Atari's original INTENTION, but in reality it's not so. In the Air Force, there were several IBM and clone systems that would not read an Atari TOS-formatted disk (TOS 1.02, TOS 1.04, and TOS 2.06). Some of the public domain IBM disk-compatible formatters for the ST would work on some Air Force systems, others would not. The problem seemed to be that while TOS created 711 disk sectors for a double-sided, double-density 3.5" disk, MS-DOS needs 713.

2) "Super VGA graphics"

Sorry, Atari, but 640 x 480 is VGA, not Super VGA (which, by the way, is 1024 x 768). You're not fooling anybody, least of all the IBM graphics and multimedia people who we all hope will migrate from the klutzy, overpriced IBM clones, Macintoshes, and Amigas with their klutzy, horribly overpriced software to the Falcon. More on my feelings on this topic at the end of this review.

Other than those two complaints--and I stress they are only MINOR complaints--the person or people who put this brochure together did a FANTASTIC job! I only hope that a lot of IBM and Apple and Amiga aficionados read it ... as well as Jerry Pournelle, Stewart Chaiffet (sp?) of "Computer Chronicles" fame, the editor of Computer Musician magazine, the editor of Compute! magazine, etc.

Sitting right next to the Falcon was an Apple Macintosh "Powerbook 170," running a 25 MHz 68030 (they DO exist! <g>). The 68030 wasn't lonely in there; it was accompanied by a 68882 (math co-processor). The demo that was running was some medieval-age game. I was, I'll admit, very impressed by the sounds coming out of such a small laptop computer: the metallic sounds (of clashing swords and so forth) were unbelievably crisp. Considering that it, like the Falcon, was in the "Digital Signal Processing" section of Motorola, I "ASSume" that it, too, had a 56001 inside. In any case, it was running SOFTWARE (gasp!). While I was impressed by it, I, like any loyal Atarian, wanted to pick it up and heave it into the nearest wastebasket because it was implicitly stealing some of the Falcon's thunder. Somehow I was able to restrain myself. (Sorry, Atari! <g>)

On the other side of Motorola's Digital Signal Processing area was an Amiga 4000, running a no-audio stream of advertising graphics profiling the history of the machine, from the Amiga 1000 to the current and long-awaited 4000. The 4000 was running a 25 MHz 68040 and had a 120 Mb IDE hard drive inside and claimed

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to have the ability to display 256,000 colors on-screen out of a palette of 16.8 billion. Nonetheless, the graphics were, in my underqualified opinion, atrocious! Heck, if they were trying to DISSUADE people from buying the Amiga, this was a good way to do it! I kept thinking to myself, "How did THIS platform ever get the reputation as 'the ultimate GRAPHICS machine' ?????"

Friday, 20 November

My original intention was to arrive at the Sands Convention

Center at around 0730 so I could get a good parking space (In Las Vegas during COMDEX? Ha! Surely, Amsler, you jest!) However, I had to take care of both some personal and Air Force business and didn't arrive at the Sands Convention Center until around 1200 after a long walk down "The Strip" through chilly winds.

I went to the second floor and started walking around, expecting to see a prominent ATARI sign almost as soon as I entered the hall. No such luck. I walked around for quite some time, taking a look at what other hardware and software companies were offering. I was greatly dismayed and even a little fearful at what I saw. (More on this at the end of this review.)

Finally, I saw the heartwarming Fuji symbol. As I approached the Atari area (which was the second-largest at the Sands, next to Onward Technology/Shanghai Ascentex Electronic), it was apparent that Atari had accented its bread-and-butter: music. In a prominent corner, near a high-traffic area, were two Falcons. There were two musicians (one of which I THINK was Jimmy Hotz), one on a keyboard and the other on a guitar. They were each plugged into a Falcon and were playing live music and Hotz, if that was him, was singing. They attracted a reasonably large crowd, about 25 people, who listened to them and their Falcons with rapt attention and visible approval showing on their faces. I got closer myself and enjoyed the show as well. I was thinking to myself, as I watched the other onlookers, "Pay close attention, you IBM and Apple knuckleheads, and read what the sign says: A T A R I !" The fact that Atari was located adjacent to the AdLib multimedia area probably was a good think inasmuch as many of the viewers of the Atari exhibits probably just meandered over from AdLib.

After they finished their musical demonstrations, I started meandering around the various Atari exhibits. The sections were variously listed as:

APPLICATIONS  
ENTERTAINMENT  
GRAPHICS  
PORTFOLIO  
PRODUCTIVITY  
SOUND & AUDIO  
SPEECH PRODUCTS  
TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Walking around, some interesting things. Lotsa Bytes Hard Disk Systems had a TT030 hooked up to a PLI Infinity 3.5" drive and a PLI Infinity 40 Turbo removable 44 Mb hard drive. On the screen was STraight FAX!, USA Version 1.06, from Joppa Software Development. I didn't "tinker" with any of this hardware/software, so I can't say how well it actually worked.

Next to this display was Micro Creations' G.I.M.E. (which stands for "Graphics Interface Modem Environment") terminal running the Phantom Background Transfer Protocol. It looked neat, but again I didn't actually use it.

Another set-up was Singular Solutions's A/D64x Audio Interface (\$1295 MSRP), hooked up to a Falcon's DSP port and a Sony 207ESD CD player. This company has been making an A/D64x

for the NeXT computer for two years. According to the company's brochure, their newest variant

"extends the sound processing capabilities of the Atari Falcon030 to provide a high quality and extremely cost effective platform for professional digital audio recording ... ideal for all phases of music production and editing. Resulting recordings exhibit a level of fidelity which cannot be improved upon by systems selling for many times the price."

The brochure went on to claim that

"The Falcon030 sets new price-performance standards for a computer with extensive multi-media capabilities. Designed from ground up for sound, music, and video applications, the Falcon030 is the ideal computer upon which to build a state-of-the-art digital audio workstation. Atari has again {Note the key word: "again" - JJA} redefined affordable, high performance computing with the Falcon030."

The president of Singular Solutions, Steve Klein, said

The Atari Falcon030, in its basic configuration, is an incredible machine for digital audio work. The inclusion of the Motorola 56001 DSP definitely puts Atari in prime position to capture a major share of the rapidly expanding digital audio market. The addition of our A/D64x and D2D EDIT results in a truly professional quality system at a price that just can't be beat."

Many people over the past few years have criticized Atari for not being aggressive in trying to set up cooperative arrangements with third-party hardware and software developers and fumbling the few that it did manage to set up. To those doomsayers, consider the words of Paul Wiffen, the Director of Marketing for D2D Systems (which makes (1) D2D-EDIT (\$299 MSRP), stereo direct-to-disk recording/editing software, (2) 4T/FX (\$599 MSRP), multi-track recording software, (3) 4I/40 (\$599 MSRP), an audio hardware "expander" and (4) SPDIO (\$299 MSRP), a digital interface for D2D-EDIT which allows the Falcon to sample input at 44.1 and 48 KHz, ideal for CD production):

"Our previous experience in hard disk recording has always required us to produce our own hardware. With the cooperative effort, we are able to concentrate on what we do best, which is software, and let Atari and Singular Solutions concentrate on the hardware. I believe that the results speak for themselves."

This is EXACTLY the kind of advertising the Falcon needs, addressing the two key advantages it provides to music industry professionals as well as semi-pros:

- 1) LOW-COST hardware/software combinations
- 2) HIGH, PROFESSIONAL-LEVEL QUALITY of music output

Their addresses are:

Singular Solutions  
Information Technologies  
959 East Colorado Blvd  
Pasadena, CA 91106

(818)-792-9567 voice  
(818)-792-0903 fax

D2D Systems  
ST John's Innovation  
Center  
Cowley Road  
England CB4 4WS

Distributed By:  
Digital I/O  
2554 Lincoln Blvd #122  
Marina Del Rey, CA 90291

(310)-398-3993

A new company (let me qualify that: "new" in the sense that I had never heard of them before) called Digital Optical Analog, Inc., had "Black Mail" on display. "Black Mail" is a voice mail system for the Atari Falcon (and, significantly, the Macintosh and NeXT computers). It's nothing more than a tiny black box, only about 5" by 3" by 1", but one that is packed with power! Their address is:

Digital Optical Analog, Inc.  
P.O. Box 58413  
Houston, TX 77258

(713)-488-2134  
INFO@DOA.COM

COMPO Software was in attendance. Their brochure called the Falcon a "super computer" and discussed the word processor "That's Write 2" (which is like calling a Ferrari F-40 a "car"). It allows multiple fonts in one document (!), multiple columns, automatic generation of tables of contents and indices, and automatic paragraph numbering. There's also a version of "That's Write" that supports PostScript.

Word Processing, database management, and spreadsheet have traditionally been the "triumvirate" as far as bedrock personal computer applications are concerned. No matter how good the hardware is, a computer almost will be guaranteed to fail in the marketplace if it doesn't have good software to make it "sing." Thanks, COMPO, for supporting the Falcon so quickly! (Perhaps before I die I'll switch from First Word Plus 3.20 to something else. Perhaps.)

COMPO's brochure also showed, among other things, MUSiCOM, a sound manipulation software package. According to COMPO,

"Now special effects previously only possible in a professional music studio can now be achieved with the Falcon 030."

One of these special effects is the harmonizer, which permits one voice to be manipulated to sound like a harmony, i.e., two or more voices singing simultaneously. MUSiCOM has a 10-channel equalizer (!) and seems to be a thoroughly well-designed piece of software (which maintains the earlier precedent set by the sundry

companies which wrote for the original ST line). According to the diagram shown, it can sample 8 bit mono or 8 or 16 bit stereo at the following KHz rates: 8.2, 9.8, 12.3, 16.5, 28.8, 24.6, 33.9, and 49.2. Their address is:

COMPO Software Corp.  
104 Esplanade Avenue Suite 121  
Pacifica, CA 94044

(415)-355-0862 voice  
(415)-355-0869 fax

A brochure that was available provided information about Goldleaf's "DA's Vektor" (\$199 MSRP), a three-dimensional graphics package that, if the brochure does it justice, is truly amazing. It's produced by the same programming team that's responsible for the "Didot" line of products. DA's Vektor can project any vector graphic onto three-dimensional surfaces and also has a "key frame" animation utility. According to the brochure

"The color auto-tracing module lets you load color images, pick colors from them, and then automatically create freely-scalable color vector graphic objects. You can even uses [sic] images as a fill pattern for vector objects."

Goldleaf's address is

Goldleaf Publishing, Inc.  
700 Larkspur Landing Circle  
Larkspur, CA 94939

(415)-257-3515

HiSoft had a very nice brochure on HiSoft BASIC Version 2, its 68000/68020/68030 compiler (Note: compiler!) which it claims typically works on 3500 source lines per minute and contain DMA sound in its ST/STe/TT operating system libraries. Perhaps the most useful feature--at least to an old FORTRAN/BASIC/PASCAL programmer like me--is the ability to redimension and extend dynamic arrays WITHOUT losing values. When I was first learning BASIC in 1980, line numbers were the rule of the day, GOTOs were not unheard of, and there were severe restrictions on many aspects of the language. HiSoft's BASIC 2 has no limits on variable sizes (!), structured concepts such as:

SELECT ... CASE  
WHILE ... WEND  
DO loops  
value and variable parameters  
local variables  
recursive subprograms and functions

According to the brochure you can disable reserved words for "increased language compatibility" (!!?) and also

"a profiler is included which analyses the program and indicates where speed improvements may be made."

Heck, I don't know why they continue to call it "BASIC" these days!

HiSoft had a second brochure entitled "The Falcon Flies." It was VERY impressive, showing on the front page a tiny glimpse of the Falcon's color-handling capability under TruePaint, the first art package that takes advantage of it. TruePaint works in all resolutions INCLUDING 768 x 480 true color and supports animation, FSM/Speedo GDOS, and IFF/TIFF/JPEG file formats. The brochure also profiled Wordflair 2, Diamond Edge (a GREAT product which I bought in September and HIGHLY recommend!), XBoot, Superbase Professional, and HiSoft's Devpac Version 3. HiSoft's address is:

HiSoft  
The Old School  
Greenfield  
Bedford MK45 5DE UK

+44 (0) 525 718181 voice  
+44 (0) 525 713716 fax

(They say "We are still working on new projects for existing Atari machines and for the new Falcon030." THANKS, HiSoft!)

If there was one exhibit which caught most people by surprise and, once caught, impressed them the most, it probably was Kodak's Photo CD running on. I can't remember if it was running on a Falcon or a TT, but it was running! The people who were observing it were practically slobbering down the front of their shirts, their jaws hanging slack in amazement. The Friday before COMDEX Atari and Kodak signed an agreement for the development of Photo CD for the Atari computer line. What this does is allow you to take a roll of 35 mm film to a photoprocessor and have the images transferred to a CD (in addition to the normal prints) ... which can then be displayed by a Falcon/CD combination or shown on a TV via a CD player. According to Kodak's brochure

"Virtually all the visual information in each original photograph is captured in an 18 megabyte file, which is compressed to about 4.5 megabytes for storage on the disk. Each picture is stored in one file at 5 different resolutions (128 x 192, 256 x 384, 512 x 768, 1024 x 1536, and 2048 x 3072), so you can use the resolution that best fits your need."

For further information write or call

Eastman Kodak Company  
Rochester, NY 14650

1-800-242-2424 ext 53

There was a fantastic set-up involving a TT being used as a real-time controller to drive a sewing machine creating caps with "ATARI" stitched on the front. Neat! Hopefully, next year they will have this available to "proletarian" Atarians (for a fee, of course) rather than just to developers and the media.

Last, but not least, Atari had a fantastic set-up in the other high-traffic corner of its area, with a Falcon running the same Moving Pixels Tina Turner "Simply The Best" video that was also running over in the Motorola area in the main hall. However, this Falcon was hooked up to a Mitsubishi XC-3715C, a giant among monitors. It was visible from a long distance away and was orders of magnitude easier to hear than that in the Motorola area. It was a great way to show off the Falcon and attracted the attention of many people.

#### CONCLUSION/OBSERVATION/OPINION

OK, COMDEX is over. The non-Boston Computer Society crowd has now been shown the Falcon three times zones away. Now what? Where does Atari, its developers, and its user community go from here?

My military personnel records have me listed as a "Numerical Methods in Electronic Data Processing" officer. My undergraduate degree is in math, not marketing, not advertising, not business management. I'm neither a musician nor a computer graphics/video expert, so what I'm going to say may be completely wrong but I'll say it anyway.

There is absolutely nothing that I've seen on the IBM or its clowns, er, clones, the Amiga, or the Macintosh that can compare to TOS 2.06 running with Warp 9. Nothing. The Atari ST line and TOS have always been the absolute easiest hardware/software combination to use, putting the least burden on the user and making him/her the most productive in the least amount of time. Whether it's word processing, database management, spreadsheets, graphics, or music, the Atari provides the quickest, easiest, least expensive way to get a task done. The most "bang for the buck" can be found under the Fuji symbol, not under a blizzard of blue bombast or under a half-eaten fruit. Obviously, the Falcon continues to build on the strength of its predecessors.

As discussed earlier, the Falcon's strong point is its sound processing capabilities. The remarks by Motorola and Singular Solutions and other third-party companies attest to this. It's no accident that such luminaries as Mick Fleetwood, B.B. King, the Pointer Sisters, and Dire Straits turned to the ST line for their professional applications. Atari should now seriously consider a high-profile advertising campaign using some "big names" in the professional music and entertainment industries to tout the Falcon. At least to a certain extent, people buy "Air Jordan" basketball shoes because you-know-who endorses them; in a similar vein I think it's self-evident that professional and semi-professional musicians will, at least to a certain extent, buy Atari if they read in a music industry magazine or hear Mick Fleetwood or someone else say, "The Falcon's the best there is." This should be especially true if they are presented with a direct, no-holds-barred price/performance comparison between the Falcon, the IBM, the Macintosh, and the "multimedia" Amiga 4000 ... because there really is no comparison. The Falcon wins hands down.

In the Feb/Mar 92 issue of Compute!, writer Lisa Sarasohn

interviewed Robert Moog, inventor of the Moog Synthesizer:

LS: What's the impact of PCs on electronic music and composition? Are we going to become a nation of songwriters?

RM: We already are. Computer software is the fastest-growing segment of the musical instrument business now. You go into a rock shop--they used to have nothing but guitars and drums, and now there's likely to be a whole big section on music software.

LS: What effect will multimedia have on electronic music?

RM: [It's] possible now to integrate [high-resolution computer graphics with music]--to have both of them under the control of one program.

One thing you can already do with today's MIDI sequencing packages is to synchronize any music you make with something that's on film or video. And if you can carry that one step further and put the visual part of it under the same program control as the sound part, then it opens up a whole new world of how you can make a work of art.

LS: What changes in the computer industry are most exciting to you?

RM: Most of the excitement is in the software. The hardware platform--IBM, Amiga, Macintosh--is getting to be more and more a generic thing. The best thing that you can say about any of them is that they work well--they don't break. But the real character, the real resource, is in the software.

LS: Will electronic music affect society in any new way?

RM: [What] word processors have done is return the publication of newspapers and magazines to the grass roots. I think the same thing is happening with music.

The Music Business--with a capital M and a capital B--is getting more and more up into the stratosphere with the amount of money it takes to start a group ... and the amount of overhead that's involved. And what comes out of Columbia Records or Elektra or any of these companies is more and more common denominator and more and more safe. But now we have thousands of creative artists, and they're making CDs--making high-quality music for peanuts and selling it over these ... small networks of customers they have.

Hmmm ... now, let's see ... taking all that into consideration, even if you disagree with what Moog said, what would be the computer best suited for this paradigm shift in music? After 16 Nov 92, I think the answer is obvious. Considering the axiomatic nature of computers in education ("Students will buy the same computers they were exposed to in school ..."), Atari should probably seriously consider giving

Falcons to Julliard and the rest of the top echelon music schools in the country (as well as to the editors of the various computer/music related magazines for review). Music is where Atari has scored (no pun intended) its biggest victories and can score even bigger ones now that the Falcon is flexing its wings.

Two weeks before COMDEX, we had our local (Las Vegas) ST users' group meeting. After the meeting adjourned, several of us were standing around talking. One member launched into a tirade about the Falcon's 68030; he was highly irked about the fact that it "only" ran at 16 MHz. (Another member tried to get him to understand that it was a \*68030\* with a \*32-bit data bus\* that he was grousing about "only" running at 16 MHz.) After seeing the Falcon in action, I defy anyone to criticize Atari's choice of a "mere" 16 MHz processor -- it handled everything that was shoved down it's throat without one single hiccup. Witness the border around the central images on the Tina Turner demo: quite a feat for a processor "only" running at 16 MHz, eh?

Video, however, is what almost made me cry. Maybe there were legitimate economic reasons for configuring the Falcon as it currently stands, but Atari has got to realize--and the sooner the better--that:

#### 640 x 480 IS NOT GOING TO CUT IT

When I was roaming around the main convention hall as well as the Sands before finding Atari, I cringed at the sight of so MANY other companies demonstrating their hardware or software for multimedia/video applications. Granted, compared to the Falcon they cost an arm and a leg (and in most cases the other arm and leg!) and have poorer sound quality, they nevertheless were showing video images at 1280 x 1024 in some cases. It was beautiful to behold such detail and crystal-clear image quality on a computer monitor. Atari has got to make the Falcon at minimum--AT MINIMUM!--1024 x 768 (preferably 1280 x 1024) ... even if it means raising the price a little or reducing its profit margins. Regardless of the Falcon's unsurpassed sound quality, I fear that many people were repulsed by the "blockiness" of the 640 x 480 images of the Tina Turner video. 640 x 480 may be good enough for an Etch-A-Sketch, but Atari is shooting itself in the foot if it sticks with that resolution.

Another aspect that will likely prove to be critical to the Falcon's success will be cooperation with other computer companies, even the "enemies." Consider the following extract from the article "The Future of the PC" by Brenton R. Schlender from the 26 Aug 91 issue of FORTUNE magazine:

Apple could foresee that its lone-wolf strategy, though lucrative, would condemn it to the fringe of the industry. Sculley for years had prodded his engineers and board of directors to consider jumping into the fast-growing market for PC clones. But only this year, after Apple discovered that even drastic price cuts weren't enough to raise the Mac's market share much beyond its present level, did the company change course. Says Sculley: "We want to be major player in the computer industry, not a niche player. The only way to do that is to work with another major player. We talked

to every company imaginable in the world. The more we looked, the more it became clear that IBM was the only choice."

...

Says Stewart Alsop, editor of the trade magazine INFOWORLD: "It's a great combination. Apple knows the importance of making a computer that is not just practical but also pleasurable to use. IBM has never understood that."

Why would a potential buyer who otherwise is impressed with the Falcon's features and even more impressed with its price, decide NOT to buy it? Typically, they would probably whine, "But I use an MS-DOS computer at work and I need compatibility with that so I can do work at home ..." As soon as someone releases a 486-DX 33/50 emulator board for the Falcon, Atari needs to jump on that fact and advertise the Falcon as being able to run EVERYTHING that currently runs on MS-DOS. A good commercial would have the Falcon showing off its sound/video capabilities and then running WordPerfect (gasp!) or Lotus (ugh!) or Harvard Graphics (yuk!) with the voice in the background saying something like, "For the price of half an IBM, you can have a full IBM AND a Falcon in one box ..." (Again, I'm not an advertising or marketing expert, but how else to convince the legions of people who have been brainwashed into believing that a "PC" means IBM to buy anything else?)

Perhaps there's no inclination for IBM to work with a "gnat" like Atari as they've done with Apple. Certainly Atari has no great love for crawling into bed with a multi-billion dollar company that makes pieces of crap (maybe that's where the term "PC" originated?) In that case, perhaps Atari should approach NeXT or Sun for a joint-development project. SOMETHING has got to be done or else Atari will find itself dominant in the music industry ... and on the fringe of everything else, a bit player in a drama in which they deservedly should be the lead.

A long-time Atarian in Las Vegas, a former professional musician who's now a programmer for Computer Sciences Corporation, bemoaned the fact that last year Atari had the ST Book at COMDEX and now none are available. He wanted to buy one and was left high and dry. He criticized the all-too-typical lack of follow-up by Atari: introducing a product and then dropping it like a hot potato. (An Atari representative told me that it was because the Germans didn't like the ST Book.) Hopefully that was the last time Atari does that; we should keep our fingers crossed that they've learned their lesson and will stick with the Falcon and grab their rightful share of the marketplace. To hell with the Germans and what they think! Who appointed them to decide what would or would not be marketable, anyway?

The person in the above paragraph also complained about the lack of sophistication of the people working the Atari area. He went to the "front desk" and asked if Soft-Logik was there and the girl didn't even know who they were(!) This certainly did not create a favorable impression; hopefully at next year's

COMDEX Atari will make sure that the people who are working the exhibit area are sufficiently knowledgeable about the computer and its software developers. I also heard the complaint that people weren't sure whether they were allowed to go up to the (unattended) Falcons that were on display and use them or were expected to just stand back and observe them. Perhaps next year there should be little signs placed saying "Please Do Not Touch" or something else to clear up this confusion.

That same person had great praise for the Falcon's SCSI ports. His advice to Atari? Stick with the industry standards! He noted that this year's innovation (i.e., the use of Atari computers) was much better than last year, even if the interaction with exhibitors was worse. (He said it was difficult to talk to people this year, "... everybody was off in their own little world ...")

Maybe I'm imagining things (it's been known to happen before! <g>), but it seems to me that in COMDEXes past, there were many, many more vendors present. Where was Migraph? Gribnif? Double Click? The Codeheads??? All the rest? (I know where Tom Hudson is! <g>) Where were the European companies? If that's NOT a misperception on my part, and there were in fact far fewer vendors at COMDEX 92, then I hope the reason is that they were huddled at home, hacking away on their developer Falcons. I hope.

Who is Atari going to market the Falcon to, outside of the music industry? Small advertising and marketing companies who can't afford sophisticated minicomputers or high-cost graphics workstations? TV and video producers who need an easy way to produce commercials on videotape? I don't know. This isn't my area of expertise. Certainly they would benefit from an inexpensive platform like the Falcon that would nevertheless provide them with PROFESSIONAL-level quality. Hopefully, Atari's marketing and advertising executives already have this planned out for next year. One thing is inarguable: the Falcon provides a no-excuses vehicle with which Atari can "save itself" from the brink of financial disaster. If they do go belly-up in a few years--knock on wood--it won't be the Falcon's fault.

Traditionally Atarians have been more passionate in their love for their computer, going back to the days of the Atari 400 and 800, than Apple or Commodore users could ever hope to be. And for good reason: Atari computer have always been less costly, more useful, and a greater joy to own and use. The ST line continued in that vein, and the Falcon gives new meaning to the hackneyed phrase "Power Without the Price."

At the Boston Computer Society meeting in October, a NeXT developer is alleged to have asked Sam Tramiel for a Falcon, saying, "Atari will be able to sell more Falcons in a month than NeXT sells in a year!" With the full support of the Atari Corporation's management, software developers, the music industry, and Atari's biggest asset (even if it doesn't appear on the balance sheet): its loyal user base, it appears that Atari is poised to return to the same prominence it had when it unleashed the ST on an unsuspecting computer industry eight years ago!

I fully expect the Falcon to fly high (and, I hope, deposit many droppings on certain other computer makers <g>)!

Go Atari!!

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> TWENTY QUESTIONS! STR Feature            Some more ?s for Sam Tramiel..  
=====

LET'S PLAY 20 QUESTIONS!  
=====

by Tim Holt

Okay, I admit it, I can't afford those services like GENie and Compuserve, so I have to wait for information to get down the pike to me. Therefore, when I read something about Atari, it is at least 10 days old. So when I heard one of these services was taking questions to ask the bosses of Atari, like Sam Tramiel, I was unable to attend. As I write this, the conference has already taken place, and I am sure it was pretty informative.

Don't they all look something like this?

[Fred@Boluxi] Thanks for being here...

[Terrybob] Sam, I want to know...

[BobBrodie@Atari]: One question at a time please..grin

[Pattie@Aim]Sam, about marketing...

[Bill@Atari]: All marketing questions will be answered in Europe

[Sam@Atari]: Falcon good...

[Sysop Billy]: Thank you all for being here today. Thank you Sam, Bill, Bob, Ringo, Paul and George, also thanks to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

[Sam@Atari]: I hope this helped answer those nagging questions

Since this is my impressions of these types of activities, I have decided to make a list of my top 20 questions for the head pooh-bahs of Atari, so the next time one of these things happens, maybe one of you could ask them for me.

- Question 20: Sam, which one of the Trammie's are you? Are you the dad, the son, the cousin?? I get you guys all confused.
- Question 19: Have you ever heard of something called advertising?
- Question 18: Do you know of any user groups left that have more than 25 members?
- Question 17: Exactly what does TOS mean?
- Question 16: Was I stupid to buy a Mega STE/4?
- Question 15: Does your company understand the concept of Christmas shopping?
- Question 14: Is "Sunnyvale" a terrible name for a city with your company in it?
- Question 13: Should I get rid of my Federated credit card?
- Question 12: Is it just me, or did Bob Brodie go through a major change in personality when you guys changed his job title?
- Question 11: What ever happened to that cool old German guy that used to work for you?
- Question 10: Why does my broker laugh when I ask "How is Atari doing this week?"
- Question 9: Do you guys know what those things are called that are played during breaks in television programs?
- Question 8: Really, should I sell my Atari now, before I won't be able to get diddly for it?
- Question 7: The government says any animal that has difficulty existing in the wild should be protected. Would you consider the Falcon an endangered species?
- Question 6: Have you ever seen a page in a magazine that contains pretty pictures that is not part of the story? Do you know what these types of pages are called?
- Question 5: Why should I buy an Atari when I can buy a Gemulator?
- Question 4: Since your company is always losing money, how can you afford to pay yourselves? Do you need help financially? I am sure we can all send you a dollar or so...
- Question 3: The school district in my city just bought 2000 Amiga 3000's for use in their schools. Have you sold 2000 of anything?
- Question 2: Do you guys understand the idea that there actually has to be stores that have your product in them, ON THE SHELVES, in order for the item to sell?
- Question 1: Do any women work for Atari? Maybe that is what you need, a smart Hillary Clinton-type. I see lots of Bobs, Sams, Bills and such. Why aren't there any Marys, Sallys, or Oprahs? You could use a woman or two around there.

Could someone please ask these questions some day?

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:HOW TO GET YOUR OWN GENIE ACCOUNT:

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To sign up for GENie service:

Set your communications software to Half Duplex (or Local Echo)

Call: (with modem) 800-638-8369.

Upon connection type HHH (RETURN after that).

Wait for the U#= prompt.

Type: XTX99587,CPUREPT then, hit RETURN.

GENie costs only \$4.95 a month for unlimited evening and weekend access to more than 100 services including electronic mail, online encyclopedia, shopping, news, entertainment, single-player games, and bulletin boards on leisure and professional subjects. With many other services, including the biggest collection of files to download and the best online games, for only \$6 per hour.

MONEY BACK GUARANTEE! Any time during your first month of membership if you are not completely satisfied, just ask for your \$4.95 back.

GENie Announcements (FREE)

1. Thursday and Friday are GENie Holidays.....
2. Don't just watch football over the holiday, participate.....QB1
3. Order your GENie Holiday Gift Certificate.....GENIESTORE
4. This Thanksgiving, the turkeys fight back in.....FED
5. Special Offer - for MEMBERS ONLY.....SOFTCLUB
6. Horse thieves and HANGMAN - RTC Game, Nov. 27th, 10pm EST.....GENEALOGY
7. SAVINGS on SOFTWARE at Computer Express.....EXPRESS
8. THE PLACE to Shop for Holiday Values is.....SEARS
9. Use Your FREE ONE-HOUR LiveWire Coupon in.....GEMSTONE
10. Disney Archivist DAVE SMITH \*Online\* MONDAY night in.....FLORIDA
11. RTC panel discusses ELECTRONIC PUBLISHING Sunday in.....WRITERS
12. ONLINE DIGITAL MUSIC REVIEW #65 now aboard in . . . . .MUSIC
13. Get the Newest Amazing MOD Music Files at Their Source.....STARSHIP
14. November GENieLamp means FREE time for programmers in.....A2PRO
15. PC/Clone and CP/M Support 12/03 10PM ET.....BBS

Welcome \*\*\*\*\* \*\*\*\*\*  
To the \*\* \*\*  
GENie \*\*\*\*\* \*\* ST  
ATARI \*\* \*\* Roundtable  
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## Atari ST Roundtable

## Real Time Conference Special Events Calendar

Nov. 27 - A Friday Night Special RTC with Bob Brodie. Join the (FRI.) Director of Communications for a closer look at COMDEX and news about the Falcon 030.

Dec 15 - Join guest Zenobot for a night of game discussion. Zarth (WED.) will answer your questions concerning which games to buy for Christmas. Come on in and get a few hints!

All Real Time Conferences begin at 10:00 p.m. EDT

## New Darlah's Treat:

MIDIBATL.LZH (ST/STE Color only) Great ST/STE 8 way scrolling arcade game, allows 2 machines to be networked through MIDI. STE specific features, full screen scrolling and digital audio and both versions run at the full frame rate. Must have, 2 player option is great. SHAREWARE from Moving Pixels. Darlah's Treat, MIDIBATL.LZH, is available at page 475;9 and is a \*Basic Service

## Last Week's Top Downloaded Programs/Utilities:

26556	GVIEW201.LZH	X B.SCHULZE1	921117	378368	321	28
Desc: View ANY picture, any rez						
26579	RAYOID.LZH	X O.OKTAL	921118	77568	201	8
Desc: Incredible Asteroid like game ST/TT!						
26537	BIGCOOKY.LZH	X M.SLAGELL	921115	2560	122	2
Desc: breathing room for cramped systems						
26632	GROCERY.LZH	X R.HOEKSTRA1	921122	30976	107	21
Desc: Grocery/Shopping list creator						
26597	PIXEL_GB.LZH	X REALM	921120	30592	100	10
Desc: Demo of advanced Screen Grabber ACC!						
26584	MMM221.LZH (LH5)	X DAVE-HENRY	921119	94464	99	29
Desc: Midi Music Maker 2.21, music player						
26544	LTMF_119.LZH	X B.SCHULZE1	921115	55808	94	2
Desc: Newest version of "flying dialogs"						

Regular Open Conference every Wednesday night, 10PM EDT, 7PM PDT  
DTP conference every Monday at 10PM eastern in room 3.

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Wednesday Night Real Time Conference  
November 25, 1992  
Host - Brian H. Harvey

Guest Speaker - Phil Comeau, Wintertree Software Inc

On behalf of the Atari ST Roundtable, I welcome all of you to this WINTERTREE Real Time Conference featuring Phil Comeau. Phil will be talking about all of his products, in particular SPELLING SENTRY, GRAMSLAM, and GRAMMAR EXPERT.

Phil may not be well known to you but his products probably are:

GRAMSLAM	GRAMMAR EXPERT
SPELLING SENTRY	BEATEGGER
MIDIX32	MIDIMAGNET

These are only a few of his programs.

Welcome Phil, I think you have some prepared remarks, so Phil you can go ahead first with your opening remarks.

<[Phil] ST-GUEST> Welcome, all. I'd be pleased to answer any questions you might have on any of our products, the future, etc.

<[Brian] B.HARVEY7> Phil, what is new at WINTERTREE SOFTWARE INC (WSI)?

<[Phil] ST-GUEST> We've just sent out a newsletter to our registered customers. This was the biggest mailing we've done to date, and I can tell you it was a lot of work! Anyone who registered for one or more of our products before October 31 should receive it in the next few days. We've also just completed version 1.10 of Spelling Sentry.

<[Brian] B.HARVEY7> What is the difference between GramSlam and Grammar Expert?

<[Phil] ST-GUEST> Grammar Expert is a reference or tutor for the rules of English grammar, punctuation, and effective writing. You use Grammar Expert while you're writing to answer questions about the writing process. For example, you might be unsure about whether to use "who" or "whom" in a sentence, or whether to write "the crowd was" or "the crowd were." Grammar Expert answers questions like these. It isn't a grammar checker, though. GramSlam, on the other hand, is a grammar checker. You use GramSlam when your writing is complete. It tells you about common grammar and writing-style problems it finds in your document.

<[Brian] B.HARVEY7> Thanks Phil. OK, your turn for a question Lyre.

<LYRE> What is Spelling Sentry? That is a new title that I've never heard of before.

<[Phil] ST-GUEST> Spelling Sentry is a spell-checking desk accessory. It works in real time, catching spelling errors while you type. It also expands abbreviations in real time. It can also check files and the GEM clipboard.

<[Brian] B.HARVEY7> OK, Lou it's your turn for a question.

<[Lou] ST.LOU> Phil, great product! Nice to see such a successful piece of work on your first try. Please tell me how SS works with Calamus SL?

<[Phil] ST-GUEST> Thanks Lou. Spelling Sentry works fine with Calamus SL, although a couple of users have reported some glitches with Calamus SL's built-in text editor. Ideally, you would use Spelling Sentry outside the editor. By the way: Spelling Sentry is our \*third\* major product <grin>.

<[Lou] ST.LOU> OK, how do you use it outside the editor? Do you have to export an ASCII file to check?

<[Phil] ST-GUEST> No, as I understand Calamus SL, you can type directly onto the page you're editing. That's how you would use Spelling Sentry with it. Maybe a real Calamus SL user could shed some light.

<[Brian] B.HARVEY7> Do you have another Lou?

<[Lou] ST.LOU> Does that mean that Spelling Sentry reads the text in the text frame? I don't understand how that can be done.

<[Phil] ST-GUEST> No, it watches the keystrokes while you type. Say you're typing a headline into frame...Spelling Sentry watches while you type it and tells you if you make a spelling mistake.

<[Lou] ST.LOU> AHHHHH! That makes sense. A live spellchecker... not a post-checker! Right? How many words in the dictionary? Can you edit and expand?

<[Phil] ST-GUEST> The dictionary has about 104,000 right now. There is also an editable user dictionary with an unlimited size.

<[Lou] ST.LOU> Thanks Phil and Good LUCK!

<[Phil] ST-GUEST> By the way: you can use it as a post-checker too, but that works best with ASCII files or simple word processor documents.

<[Brian] B.HARVEY7> OK, your turn for a question Anna.

<[Anna @ AtaAd] A.MASON4> Hi Phil...Can you have more than one abbreviation list and load them as needed in SS? Also, can you tell us the price? Thanks!

<[Phil] ST-GUEST> Anna, you can have as many abbreviation files as you like. Only one is loaded at a time. The price is \$59.95 (US).

[Anna @ AtaAd] A.MASON4> Are you limited to the number of abbreviations per file?

<[Phil] ST-GUEST> Yes. Currently, you're limited to 128 per file. If that

turns out to be practical problem for many users, we'll make it unlimited (i.e., limited by memory) in a future version.

<[Brian] B.HARVEY7> By the way Spelling Sentry works great with Abbreviator ST! OK, your turn for a question Lyre!

<LYRE> Phil, I am an unregistered user of Gram Slam. What is the current version number? Also, what is the upgrade policy? (I have version 3 & all docs - just checked.)

<[Phil] ST-GUEST> The current version is 3.32. You should be receiving a newsletter from us that will explain the upgrade policy...oops, you said you were unregistered. In that case, our standard policy is \$5.00 + \$3.00 S/H for upgrades.

<[Brian] B.HARVEY7> Go John.

<[The King] JOHN.KING.T> Phil: Does Spelling Sentry work with type ahead buffers in Aladdin or STalker?

<[Phil] ST-GUEST> It sure does. I use it with both programs all the time.

<[The King] JOHN.KING.T> I must go and buy it First Thing on Friday. Thanks.

<[Brian] B.HARVEY7> Phil, how memory intensive is Spelling Sentry? What is the minimum memory setup?

<[Phil] ST-GUEST> Spelling Sentry is designed to adapt to the memory you have available. You control how much memory is allocated to it. The more you assign, the faster it runs, because it can keep more of the dictionary in memory where it can be searched quickly. The base accessory needs about 98K. Another 20K is needed for various internal purposes. A minimum of 35K is needed for the dictionary and its index, bringing the minimum total to 153K. With this allocation, Spelling Sentry is going to be hitting the disk pretty heavily -- especially noticeable if you use it with a floppy.

If you allocate 340K, Spelling Sentry will be able to keep the entire dictionary in memory, so it will run at top speed. I have Spelling Sentry set up to use 100K on my machine.

<[Brian] B.HARVEY7> OK, your turn for a question John too.

<[John too] J.G.H.> Spelling Sentry works with all term programs to date? And how is the speed (not that I am a 100 wpm typer)?

<[Phil] ST-GUEST> It works with GEM programs and DAs. Term programs that are TOS or TTP won't work with Spelling Sentry. As far as speed goes, I find it's barely noticeable. People who see it demo'd at shows comment on its speed. But again, speed is dependent on memory configuration.

<[Brian] B.HARVEY7> OK, your turn for another question Lyre. Keep them coming people!

<LYRE> Their were a few other products listed on the RTC Announcement.

These were Tree Saver, Beategger (besides the Midi ones that is). Could you tell me more about these programs?

<[Phil] ST-GUEST> Sure. TreeSaver is a printing program that saves paper by using the space available on each page efficiently. It uses your printer's small fonts to print 2 full 80-column pages on each side of each sheet of paper. Beat Egger is an entry-level drum machine program.

<LYRE> OK, going back to Grammar Expert, what is the price of the program? And Tree Saver? (Both of which I could use!) <LYRE>

<[Phil] ST-GUEST> Grammar Expert is \$59.95. TreeSaver is \$24.95.

<LYRE> Thanks Phil! I'm done.

<[Brian] B.HARVEY7> Thanks, Lyre. How does Spelling Sentry compare to THUNDER and similar products on the IBM/Mac?

<[Phil] ST-GUEST> Well, I'm not sure how it compares with spelling checkers on other platforms. Let's say I'd be surprised if they had features Spelling Sentry lacks.

THUNDER was a great program in its time, but I think Spelling Sentry is superior to THUNDER in just about every way. Spelling Sentry has a larger dictionary, yet it's faster and doesn't bog down your system. It also has an abbreviation feature -- worth the price of Spelling Sentry alone -- which THUNDER doesn't have. But probably the most significant thing Spelling Sentry has over THUNDER is that Spelling Sentry is still supported. Spelling Sentry works with Atari's new computers, new TOS versions, and new monitors. That's important for people who are considering upgrading their computers.

<[Brian] B.HARVEY7> So Spelling Sentry is a lot faster with the more memory you allot, right? What about version 1.10? Will there be any speed increase?

<[Phil] ST-GUEST> No, version 1.10 won't be faster than 1.10. We worked on responding to user comments for this new version. But we are working on a way of making the dictionary both smaller and faster. That will probably appear in an interim release...maybe 1.11 or 1.12.

<[Brian] B.HARVEY7> As a owner of Spelling Sentry, I would like to know what is changed in the new version of Spelling Sentry?

<[Phil] ST-GUEST> Here's an overview of the new features:

- Clicking on Spelling Sentry's entry in the Desk menu now makes Spelling Sentry's window active. If you use Spelling Sentry with a program that hogs the entire screen, or you just like to keep your open windows as large as possible, you can now easily bring Spelling Sentry's window to the front.

- We've added several features to make the correct-word dialog easier to use. First, you can now replace the misspelled word with an alternate by double-clicking on the alternative word. Second, the Replace button is now the default. Once you've selected an alternative word, you can just

tap the Return key to replace it. Third, double-clicking on the "Add to user dictionary" button now closes the correct-word dialog.

- Some new features make abbreviations more powerful. You can now turn off case sensitivity, so Spelling Sentry will recognize "WSI" and "wsi" as the same abbreviation. You can also tell Spelling Sentry to capitalize the first letter of an expansion if the first letter of an abbreviation is capitalized -- Spelling Sentry would expand "btw" as "by the way" and "Btw" as "By the way". You can now easily make an abbreviation possessive by adding 's to the end. For example, Spelling Sentry would expand "WS's" as "Wintertree Software's." And finally, you can now print your abbreviation file from Spelling Sentry.

The good news for Spelling Sentry owners is that this upgrade is free! We'll be uploading a patch to version 1.00 on GEnie. Anyone who doesn't have access to a modem can send their disk in to us and we'll do the upgrade for a \$3.00 S/H charge.

<[Brian] B.HARVEY7> Do you know when the patch will be ready?

<[Phil] ST-GUEST> We expect to upload a patch to GEnie this weekend. We'll probably do the patch in "SuperZap" format.

<[Brian] B.HARVEY7> Thank Phil. You are next for a question Lyre.

<LYRE> Phil, I've been considering getting an SST or Turbo board, will these affect your programs adversely? (I assume that they will of course speed them up.)

<[Phil] ST-GUEST> Should be no problem. We tried Spelling Sentry on Jim Allen's board at the WAACE show in October.

<[Brian] B.HARVEY7> Do you have another, Lyre?

<LYRE> This is a shot in the dark, but what about the Falcon? Do they currently work with it or will that be in a future upgrade?

<[Phil] ST-GUEST> That I honestly don't know. As soon as I get a chance, I plan to test. But like I said earlier...we are still supporting our products. If there's an incompatibility problem, we'll fix it!

<[Brian] B.HARVEY7> OK, your turn for a question Anna.

<[Anna @ AtaAd] A.MASON4> Is SS compatible with MultiDesk Deluxe?

<[Phil] ST-GUEST> Yes, I use it with MultiDesk Deluxe personally, and I know many users do as well. You have to make Spelling Sentry a resident DA for it to work properly.

<[Anna @ AtaAd] A.MASON4> Will have to add it to my Xmas list!

<[Brian] B.HARVEY7> It works great with MDD, for me!

<[Phil] ST-GUEST> I'll get one ready for Santa to pick up <grin>.

<[Brian] B.HARVEY7> Phil, how about doing the door prize for these anxious people?

<[Phil] ST-GUEST> Okay. The first person to state the price of TreeSaver wins!

<[Brian] B.HARVEY7> We will be in frenzy mode, NOW!!!!

<[Anna @ AtaAd] A.MASON4> 24.95

<[Kevin] K.KOZORIZ> 2495

<[Brian] B.HARVEY7> Well, that was real close..However, Anna was just a second quicker. Sorry, Kevin. You almost made it.

<[Anna @ AtaAd] A.MASON4> Thanks Phil....I never win anything!

<[Brian] B.HARVEY7> Kevin, you have a question?

<[Kevin] K.KOZORIZ> What is the latest version of GramSlam? I have version 3.00 and I am wondering what has changed in the new version.

<[Phil] ST-GUEST> Kevin, GramSlam is now at 3.32. A lot has changed since 3.00!

<[Kevin] K.KOZORIZ> Any general specifics :) Speed, etc. How do I upgrade?

<[Phil] ST-GUEST> Here's a quote from the newsletter:

Better document statistics; new overall-style score; progress thermometer shows what portion of your document has been checked; faster booting; faster checking; better tests for British vs. American spelling; better handling of word-processor documents

<[Kevin] K.KOZORIZ>How do I get the newsletter?

<[Phil] ST-GUEST>To upgrade, send your original disk and \$8.00. To get the newsletter, just register!

<[Kevin] K.KOZORIZ> Thanks, that's all.

<[Brian] B.HARVEY7> Go again Lyre [grin].

<LYRE> Phil, in a number of the RT's I frequent, unique words are utilized. How will Spelling Sentry make me aware that these words are not a part of it's dictionary?

<[Phil] ST-GUEST> When Spelling Sentry encounters a word that's not in its dictionary (i.e., is probably misspelled), it signals you by sounding a tone and flashing the screen. The signal is configurable, by the way. You can add these unusual words to Spelling Sentry's dictionary so it will know them next time.

<LYRE> Configurable? I can have either the beep or the flash?

<[Phil] ST-GUEST> You can have the beep, flash, or both. The pitch of the tone is configurable too.

<Lyre> OK, maybe one more - if you don't mind? Is there a limit to the number of user entries in the dictionary?

<[Phil] ST-GUEST> The only limit is memory, and memory is configurable. I have 200-300 in mine with no problem.

<[Brian] B.HARVEY7> Since there isn't a rush for more questions, I will ask the last few!! Phil, you have been programming on the Atari for awhile. What is your vision of the future of Atari ST(E)/ Falcon? Also, what is the future of WINTERTREE and the ATARI? In particular, what is coming up for WSI in '93?

<[Phil] ST-GUEST> I think the future *\*is\** the Falcon. I saw the demo at WAACE and came away very impressed. This is a world-class machine with an excellent price. But it takes more than technical superiority to make a machine successful -- it takes good marketing. Everyone is hoping Atari doesn't drop the ball on this one.

We have upgrades planned for GramSlam and Grammar Expert. I don't like to talk about new features until they're written and tested, but I think we have a workable design for a change to GramSlam that would allow users to edit their documents. People have been asking for this feature since GramSlam was released 2 1/2 years ago. For various reasons, document editing within GramSlam is extremely complex. But like I said, so far, this exists only on paper!

I've been doing all sorts of research to come up with new grammar information for both GramSlam and Grammar Expert. The big problem is finding time to pound all this stuff into the keyboard.

Like many Atari developers, we are also trying to break into the Microsoft Windows market. We have a version of GramSlam for MS-DOS called WStyle; I'm working on porting that to Windows now. One day Grammar Expert and Spelling Sentry will follow. This doesn't mean we're giving up the Atari market, btw.

People have asked us about developing a thesaurus accessory for the ST. We've been looking into various synonym lists available for licencing. If we find one that's suitable, a thesaurus DA might be a reality one day. Maybe "Synonym Sentry" would be a good name!

<[Brian] B.HARVEY7> We're drawing to a close for the formal portion of the WINTERTREE RTC. Before I put the room into Frenzy Mode, do you have any closing words, Phil?

<[Phil] ST-GUEST> Just thanks to everyone who attended, thanks to our customers, and especially Happy Thanksgiving to our American friends.

<[Brian] B.HARVEY7> I wish to thank you Phil Comeau for making it here tonight. I also wish to thank all the attendees for their questions and patience. In frenzy mode ...now!

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End of Formal RTC

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<LYRE> Phil, you probably answered this, but what is the price of Spelling Sentry?

<[Phil] ST-GUEST> Lyre: Spelling Sentry lists for \$59.95.

<M.HILL13> I just got my Wintertree news. The order form says \$4.00 shipping. And the newsletter says \$3 for upgrading Sentry. Which is it?

<[Phil] ST-GUEST> M.HILL13: We made an error, so we'll accept the lower price.

<M.HILL13> Phil, \$3 or \$4 is fine with me. I just wanted to check to be sure.

<[Phil] ST-GUEST> Brian, I have a question for you: why do you use the abbreviation feature in Spelling Sentry with Abbreviator ST?

<[Brian] B.HARVEY7> OK, this wasn't clear in the RTC. I use it so I can have large Abbreviations

<[Phil] ST-GUEST> Ahhhh.

<[Brian] B.HARVEY7> without chaining. Also, only the new Spelling Sentry have the capital feature. But Phil, you know if it was a choice your product would have to be used!

<[John] J.EIDSVOOG1> Phil, is there a hot-key for turning background checking on/off?

<[Phil] ST-GUEST> John...yes. The default is Alt/B. It's configurable. Brian: No sweat. I wish Spelling Sentry had longer abbrevs too.

<[Phil] ST-GUEST> Brian...what happens if they both try to expand the same abbrev?

<[Brian] B.HARVEY7> Phil, I do get the alarm when Abbreviator is expanded and the one time they both had the same abbreviation one overwrote the other.

Be sure to stop by Friday 27 November for our next RTC with Bob Brodie for a closer look at COMDEX. Your host will be Lou Rocha See you then.

- 
- \* GramSlam Grammar and Writing Style Checker
  - \* Grammar Expert -- an on-line reference and tutor for the rules of English grammar, punctuation, and effective writing
  - \* Spelling Sentry -- an on-line, real-time spelling checker

MIDI-related tools --

- \* MidiMagnet -- captures MIDI events from other programs and saves them in standard-MIDI file format
- \* MIDIX32 -- Plays and converts standard MIDI files using the built-in sound chip
- \* BeatEgger -- An entry-level drum machine

And finally

- \* TreeSaver -- A printing program for ASCII files that saves paper by efficiently using the space available on each page

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> FONT NUMBERS STR InfoFile  
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#### Helpful Reference Numbers

#### FONT NUMBER REFERENCE =====

by Bernie LaGrave  
[B.LAGRAVE1 on GENie]

Over the past several months several people have been converting font from Calamus to PageStream format. I would like to thank both the original creators of these fine fonts and the people who "Fontverted" them. After some "touching-up" these fonts have proved to be very useable.

One of the potential problems with fonts that are put into Public Domain is the fact that many are not registered with SoftLogik. Although the numbers that were arbitrarily assigned to these converted fonts do not (to my knowledge) conflict with any current fonts, as SL assigns more numbers, it is only a matter of time before conflicts happen.

Therefore, I have taken the liberty to ask for font numbers for the PD fonts listed below. Getting a registration number is very easy... just call SoftLogik at (314)894-0431 and ask for one to be assigned. Usually it will be assigned "on the spot". You can also call SL's BBS (314)894-0057 and leave E-mail for Cheryl (Tech Support), user #11.

Font Name	PD No.	Reg No.
Advertising PD	7111	7045
Barnum PD	8888	7055
BurlOblique PD	2223	7065
Calligraphy2 PD	3066	3005
Celtic PD	9600	7075
Chancery PD	7777	7085
Chicago PD	????	7095
Dingbats PD	4444	7105

Flash PD	9876	3015
Harlow PD	1111	7115
Olympia PD	1074	1005
Souvenir Medium PD	5075	5035
Souvenir Medium Ital. PD	5076	5045
Western PD	7035	4005

Some of the above are available in the SoftLogik RT; the rest are available in the Atari RT (goto Page 475/476). If you wish to avoid font conflicts, change the font numbers in your files. It's a simple process. You do need access to an Atari, however. Use the PD PageStream Font Editor, which is available on GEnie and "fine BBS' around the world". Load in the font you wish to renumber. Go to the drop-down "Set" menu. Select the correct file type. Click on the the font number entry. Begin typing. The old number will disappear and will be replaced with the new number. Click "OK" in the bottom left box. Be sure to "Save" your file. Also, be sure to renumber all three file types (bit-mapped .12H, metrics .FM and outline .DMF) and four files if you have created postscript (.PSF). You have to do this using the old font conversion utility which is also available in this RT.

That's all there is to it. If you have questions, you can leave them in the SoftLogik RT message area, Category 1, Topic 3 (Fonts).

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> ATARI IS DEAD? STR FOCUS!

One user lets it all hang out!

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ATARI IS DEAD?
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by Tim Holt

Atari is dead. To the surprise of very few, the Atari computer company, as a viable alternative to the Macintosh and IBM/MS-Dos died in it's sleep last night. A few relatives were at the company's side the night it passed away, but many former friends were no where to be seen, when the venerable old man passed. Authorities say the cause of death appears to be "natural causes", but close friends have repeated stories of depression, dementia, and general failing of health in the last few years of life. Atari is preceded in death by it's brother the Osborne, the Commodore Amiga, the Timex Sinclair, and a host of other "first of their kind" computers that captured the attention of the computing public for a short period of time, but were unable to generate interest outside a few die hard users. Funeral services are pending, as no one has stepped forward to claim the company as their own. 1972-1992. Rest in peace.

Those are hard words to write for me. I have lived, breathed, and worked on Atari computers for most of my "computer life", but I think that it is

time we as a computer group finally make the hard choice and proclaim the computer dead. We must now get on with our computer lives. We can always have a place in our hearts and memories for our "first love", but times change, the world changes, and, as Darwin pointed out, those that cannot adapt will eventually die. Atari is dead. For those that still doubt, what can I offer as evidence? Here is the evidence that rigor has set-in on the body:

- A Who writes programs for your computer? Does Microsoft write for Atari? Does WordPerfect? How many major applications on the Macintosh or MS DOS line actually make it to the Atari? Very few. Granted, the people that have stuck with the Atari line are VERY faithful, and the products they produce are very good, but having WordPerfect in your corner is like having Evander Holifield fight instead of Leon Spinks. It's nice to have lot's of Leon's, and they are all very nice, but we have needed a real contender for a long time, and we simply do not have one. No one writes for us. WordPerfect said it best: "It doesn't sell, so why bother with it?" No one of real power in the computer world takes us seriously. Sure, you can import this text and that spreadsheet, to the Atari, but why did we always have to do that? Because the programs that were written always were made to catch up to the rest of the computer world. Atari started fast, but lost the race. The computer is dead.
- B The Atari is still, after seven years, not taken seriously in the computing world and the business world. When you buy a computer, you aren't just buying a bunch of hardware and software. You are buying a way of doing something. Buy a PC and learn how to use 1-2-3, and you now have a marketable job skill that many companies in the world will value. Learn to use an ATARI spreadsheet, no matter how powerful and user friendly, and you have no skill that is accepted in the market. You are no longer as experienced as those with Mac and PC experience, no matter how long you work on an Atari. There is no MS WORD, no Pagemaker, no 1-2-3, no Excel for the Atari. There is no Grolier's Encyclopedia, there is no Carmen San Diego, no MS Works. Walk into B. Dalton Bookseller and see hundreds of Mac and MS Dos titles. You will not find ONE Atari title. NOT ONE. Look for Atari in Computer Shopper, BYTE, or any other general computing magazine. Atari is nowhere to be found. B. Dalton and other computer publishers know that the Atari is dead.
- C Adapt or Die. Atari failed to adapt to it's niche role as a home computer. Instead, through bumbling and fumbling, the computer went through a series of personality changes, from home computer, to business computer, to DTP computer, to Midi computer, and back to home computer, and now "multi-media" computer. Like a lost dog that never could find it's way home, Atari wandered aimlessly for years. Now, it has been picked up by the dog catcher, and gassed at the pound. Who let the dog out in the first place? Who cares. Hind sight is 20-20. The dog is dead. Atari is dead.
- D Failure to keep it's name in the public eye. There is not one user out there, with the possible exception of a Bob Brodie, that will say that Atari has done a good job promoting it's product. NOT ONE! How many YEARS have we been screaming for advertising? How many YEARS have we been pleading for this company to promote?? How many YEARS have we been saying "Well, next year will be the year of Atari?" When I first read that statement in STReport, it was 1987. FIVE years ago! No ad campaign, no public relations worth a plug nickel (Oh, I forgot the PORTFOLIO was in a movie...oooooooh), and what little print ads

there are have been placed in Atari magazines. Atari could be selling alien technology out of Star Trek, but no one would pay attention, because no one knows Atari exists. Well, frankly, I have had enough. I don't care if tomorrow is the start of the "Year of Atari". It has become a bad joke. There will be no "Year of Atari" because the Atari is dead.

- E How does the computer performs on the stock market? Atari stock has hovered right near 1 5/8 per share for the better part of three years. It actually went up around 3 dollars a share about the time Atari introduced the TT, but when investors saw that the TT was actually just an ST with muscles, back it slipped. Investors long ago have realized that the company and hence the computer was dead, it is time we do so as well. Why haven't investors started buying Atari, now that the new "generation" has been introduced? Because investors go by track record. Atari has the track record of a company that is dead. The stock of Atari's, when fully graphed out over a period of three years, looks very much like the straight line that a heart makes when it has stopped functioning. "Flat line" is what they call it in the medical field. It is time to take the patient off the artificial respirator. Even the best doctors know when the patient has died. Atari has died.

Now I realize that this article will make a few of you angry or even mad. And it should. ATARI IS DEAD. But please don't kill the messenger. Can you really look at your computer, and say "This format will be alive and healthy in 5 years." No, you cannot. Not if you are being honest. Now, can you look at the MS DOS format and say "This format will be alive and healthy in five years?" Yes you can. Same for Mac. Perhaps not as robust as they are now, but they will be around. Atari will not, because Atari is dead.

We will still use the darn things, and since we are so loyal (or just stupid?), we will use them until the circuits have been fried, and the monitors are out of focus. But we should not expect anything exciting to come our way. An occasional program, and an upgrade, but nothing worthy of note. Sure, the Falcon will cause a ruckus for a few months, but it will fade, just like the STACY faded, just like the TT faded, just like MEGA faded, just like the MEGA STE faded. They all faded because ATARI is dead.

Only Atari users will buy new Atari products. And our numbers grow smaller and smaller each year. (Try to find a user group with more than 25 members. There are not that many around anymore. Five years ago, there were bunches.) Atari Interface Magazine, a magazine MADE UP OF USERGROUPS, is on the hurting, because the number of subscribers, and advertisers has dwindled to almost nothing. That does not happen to a computer group where the computers in use are a viable entity. Our numbers continuously dwindle because ATARI IS ALL BUT DEAD.

Sorry to see you go old friend. But I won't cry. I have been expecting it for too long, and actually suspected it years ago. I guess I have just been going through denial. But now I see that you are dead. It is time to bury the corpse. Rest in peace old friend. Rest in peace.

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> ATARI WINS ONE! STR FOCUS!      ATARI WINS (C) BATTLE FOR BREAKOUT!

ATARI CORP. WINS KEY LEGAL VICTORY IN COPYRIGHT CASE

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THE WALL STREET JOURNAL  
23 Nov 92 LAW

[Reprinted without permission, under the "reasonable use"  
interpretation of the 1976 Copyright Act. - John J. Amsler]

by Paul M. Barrett, Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

WASHINGTON -- Atari Corp. won a critical legal victory in its long-running battle to obtain a copyright for its Breakout video game.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit reversed a trial judge's ruling against Atari and said the Copyright Office had lacked a "rational basis" for refusing to issue a copyright for the game to Atari, which is based in Sunnyvale, Calif. The ruling was based on a liberal interpretation of the federal copyright law that could benefit other makers of video games and audio-visual products generally.

Applying a 1991 Supreme Court decision intended to clarify copyright standards, the appellate court said that an original work need only reflect a modest degree of creativity to qualify for legal protection. "The requisite level of creativity is extremely low; even a slight amount will suffice," the high court said in the 1991 decision. The owner of a copyright may prohibit others from imitating his work or may charge royalties for such use.

Breakout is a relatively early and rudimentary video game in which the players move paddles on a screen to hit a ball against a wall. In its most recent refusal to register the game, the Copyright Office described its elements as "simple geometric shapes and coloring" which "per se are not copyrightable."

The Appeals Court said that this rejection trivialized the selection and arrangements of the elements. The court stressed that the ball is in fact square, the paddles shrink as the game progresses and that various sounds accompany the ball's bounces.

"It is not the [Copyright Office's] task to shape the protection threshold or ratchet it up beyond the minimal creative spark required by the Copyright Act and the Constitution," the

court said. Noting that all video games aren't necessarily worthy of protection against imitation, the court sent the Atari matter back to the Copyright Office for further clarification.

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> FONTVERTER! STR Review

In-depth review of FONTVERTER

FONTVERTER!  
=====

Reviewed by Doyle Helms  
Software Editor @ STReport

In today's DTP world there are many formats of pictures/clip art for inclusion into your work. The Atari ST/e/TT is capable of using most if not all of them into the two major DTP applications, Calamus and PageSTream. If by chance you encounter a clip art file that is not importable into your DTP program, then there is more than likely a program that will convert the format to allow it to be in a compatible format.

The same could not always be said of the fonts for these two outstanding software packages. If you used Calamus then you used a Calamus format font period. Conversion from another font format to Calamus format was not always possible and when it was so, it was quite difficult. With PageSTream 1.8 and up to the present version of 2.2, PGS allowed the use of not only its native (DMF,FM) font format but also the user is capable of using Postscript Type 1 fonts straight out the box. The Postscript fonts are of high quality outline fonts that are as good as any of the native CFN(Calamus) and PGS fonts. One drawback to using the Type 1 fonts is that a majority of them do not have a screen bit mapped font included. This screen bitmap font file allows for higher quality on screen rendition of the font. The page/screen redraws are MUCH faster while in PGS if you have the bitmap font(ABF). The same can be said about PageSTream and its native font format. The user is not required to have the screen bitmap font file when using either Type 1 or PageSTream. Calamus does not use or really need screen fonts.

Lets look at some of the benefits of converting fonts from one format to another.

I have found for the most part that total file size of a Type 1 font is greater than its PageSTream counterpart. I do not know of a application for the ST/TT that will allow for the editing of a Postscript Type 1 font. So if you encounter a Type 1 font that the kerning is not quite right or some other cosmetic appearance is not quite to your liking you are stuck with it. If you can convert the Type 1 font over to PageSTream then you are allowed easy manipulation of the font and its detail. The same can be said of a Calamus font vice the Type 1. If you are lucky enough to have both Calamus and PageSTream, then you can have identical fonts in both formats! What? Doesn't that increase disk space

needed to hold these "duplicate" fonts? Yes I'm afraid it does. IF SoftLogik and DMC could compromise on a font format then the user would benefit greatly. If Calamus could use Type 1 fonts then the user could convert all of his/her fonts to Type 1 for both programs. No duplicity. I realize I'm getting a little long winded in this but I promise it will lead up to a point shortly.

The POINT.

The point of the matter is that there is a program package available NOW that will allow the easy conversion from Type 1 to PageSTream or to Calamus. From Calamus to PageSTream or PageSTream to Calamus. This font conversion package of which I speak is produced by MEGATYPE Software. This conversion application is not ALL-IN-ONE, but it comes in several smaller programs, each handling a different aspect of the conversion process.

Quickie Run Through...

Let's convert a Type 1 font over to Calamus and also to PageSTream. First of all the user will execute the Type 1 Converter program. This brings up a Fileselector asking for the Type 1 PFB file name. Once that is entered, the program then checks the font for it being either a IBM compatible type or Mac Type 1. If it is determined to be a Mac format then the user must exit Type 1 Converter and process the font file through the MAC to IBM program. Now back to the Type 1 Converter, if the file checks out OK then the file is saved to an ECF format file. The user is given the option of viewing the font as it is converted. If you choose YES on the view conversion dialog you will see each character as it will appear. The viewing option is great IF you have confidence in the font integrity. Some fonts seem to be screwy with some character displays. I have found this problem with only 5% of the fonts I have converted. If you do choose the option of not to view the font conversion, the process is much faster. After the file is saved, the user is queried as to whether to convert another Type 1 font. I convert 5-10 fonts on average in this manner before moving on to the next step.

The next step involves running a program that will read the AFM Type 1 file (if the Type 1 font has one, not all do) to gather information concerning the kerning pairs and character widths. This program then includes the font data into the ECF file and is now ready for conversion. the user now executes the Fontverter program. From within Fontverter the user can convert from ECF to DMF/FM(PageSTream) or to CFN(Calamus). The user can also convert from Calamus to PageSTream and vice versa.

Fontverter allows for "Batch" file conversions. the user can "tag" a file in the file window or select "TAG" from the choices and tag all in mass. The user selects the file(s) to convert and selects the conversion button. The process begins. The file is displayed as it is converted and then saved upon completion in the format the user chose. The "SHOW" conversion is also an option here, personally I like to watch for any garbage characters. Lastly, the user is prompted for the style to save the file in such as Italic, Bold and etc. Upon selection of this option the file is saved and almost ready for use. The reason I say "almost", is that the PageSTream font really needs the screen bitmap font. Remember it is not required, but highly recommended. This last conversion process involves exiting Fontverter and executing a DMF to ??H program. The ??H file is the screen bitmap font. This file is normally rendered in 12,18 and 24 heights. These numbers represent the on screen POINT size. Upon executing the DMF->??H program the user is presented with a dialog box

asking for either Batch or Single conversion. After selection of batch or single the user is again queried as to the point size of 12, 18 or user entered amount. I personally use 12,18 and 24 sizes. Once size is selected the program then processes the file(s) and produces the appropriate file to the user defined path.

That about covers the Type 1 to PageSTream conversion. The Type 1 to Calamus is similar to the PGS conversion up to the ECF file creation. After the ECF file is created, the user simply selects ECF in the "From" menu and CFN in the "To" menu in Fonverter. The file is read in and a CFN Calamus format font file is produced ready for use. If the user has some PageSTream fonts they wish to have in Calamus format, then Fonverter is used to convert them very quickly with only a couple of mouse clicks.

IMO--

I My Opinion the fonverter package is well executed and for the most part relatively free of any major obstacles. The one "bug" I found is in batch processing of the DMF->??H files. If I convert these files singularly there is no problem. If I choose BATCH, the program seems to execute fine but the rendered ??H files are not representational of the original file. I would also like to see ALL the feature of the various programs implemented into ONE program. I would like to be able to convert from the Atari formats to the Type 1 format also.

Closing Arguments--

I will recommend this program package to anyone needing to convert font files from one program format to another. Barring the BATCH process problem, the programs included here are solid and they render fonts indistinguishable from the original. Included in this package is a program that will allow conversion of fonts to GDOS format. I have not had the "pleasure" of trying out this program but I will present a look over at a later date if anyone is interested. Be sure to check out the ISD font examples on GEnie (M475;3) and also the MANY Calamus and Type 1 fonts available in the ST-RT on GEnie. SoftLogik also has a RT on GEnie that will assist anyone with PageSTream fonts. Contact DFTURNOCK on GEnie concerning the FontVerter package.

FontVerter 2.10  
MegaType Software  
P.O. Box 645  
Southbend, IN. 46624  
(219) 288-7468  
DFTURNOCK (GEnie)

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> STRReport CONFIDENTIAL "Rumors Tidbits Predictions Observations Tips"  
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Seems the Crystal Ball is glowing white hot again... and in the middle of the rumor box in the ball are the words COMB LIQUIDATORS. Seems there was a rumored surplus of Portfolios so.... well we all know what Comb does best...

- Houston Tx

DOUBLE CLICK TO CALL IT A DAY!

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From GEnie's ST RT

Category 30, Topic 9

Message 29            Thu Nov 26, 1992  
L.MCCLURE            at 16:51 EST

So, how many folks out there have received their November 1992 issue of "Atari Advantage"? If you have, and you have not taken note of what is on the left side of page 9, do so NOW.

Here's a summary for those who don't subscribe: According to the sidebar, DC is shutting down. That's the bad news. The good news is that the programs will be released for free distribution. (Hey, I'll finally be able to get upgrade my DC Desktop)! <grin>

I just wonder if the source code will be included. (That would seem to be asking a bit much, though).

BTW, Storm \*will\* be brought out by Advantage Software, on schedule. (This is noted both in the sidebar article, and more subtly in the ad for Storm on page 25).

I would say this is a nice thing Mike is doing...after all, he could have either sold all the programs to another company, or simply folded tent and disappeared. Releasing the programs for free is a nice touch, especially for those of us who do not own all of them yet! <grin>

Category 30, Topic 9

Message 30            Fri Nov 27, 1992  
K.GERDES [TraceTech]        at 12:38 EST

L.MCCLURE,

Looking out for myself, I just want to make a minor clarification to your post in regards to "the (DC) programs will be released for free distribution", and hopefully head off any misinterpretation.

Data Diet v1 was originally distributed by Double Click but the DD distribution rights were transferred to me/Trace Technologies recently. All programs in the Data Diet package (including Squish) will NOT be part of DC's plans.....whatever they may turn out to be.

- Keith [TraceTech]

For the record, STReport was well aware of the foregoing information well over three weeks ago. But... in accommodating Mr. Vederman's request that we wait for a formal release announcing the developments and plans,

we withheld releasing the story until now as we see its already been done elsewhere. Unfortunately, its sad to see such things happening but then it too, is a sign of the times.

- Houston, TX

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NEW KID ON THE BLOCK!

National Videotext Network (NVN) has recently added an Atari ST Forum to it's growing lists of available services. The Atari ST Forum is going through its final "construction" phases and will be available to NVN members by mid-December 1992.

U.S. Videotel, founded in 1986, is an electronic information and interactive services provider. The U.S. Videotel Network launched in March of 1989, and provided electronic information services to the Texas market.

In the fall of 1991, the National Videotex Network Corp. (NVN) and U.S. Videotel Inc. (USV) announced the formation of an alliance, as a result of the purchase by USV's parent company of the majority of NVN stock. This venture allowed the nationwide launch of the National Videotex Network, which provides on-line data and information exchange services. The national launch for NVN began on May 1, 1992.

The future of NVN will be one which continues to remain sensitive and responsive to market needs. Additional services and advances in electronic information will continue to be added, to provide unique and interesting services on an on-going basis.

NVN service offerings can be broken into three categories: Basic, Premium, and Premium Plus.

#### Basic Services

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Most of the Basic services are available 24 hours a day with no connect time charges beyond the basic membership fee. However, a select group have functions for which transaction fees are charged. Basic services are accessible through a flat rate charge of \$5.95 per month.

#### Premium Services

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For Premium services, Members pay connect charges for the amount of time spent in a particular service. Premium services are accessible Monday through Friday for a connect time charge of \$9.00/hour from 8 am to 6 pm, and \$6.00/hour from 6 pm to 8 am; and on Saturday and Sunday for a connect time charge of \$6.00 all day (6 pm Friday til 8 am Monday), central time zone.

#### Premium Plus Services

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Premium Plus services are subject to the same type of connect time charge as Premium services. However, a surcharge is also added to the connect time for these services.

You can join NVN one of two ways. By voice phone 1-800-336-9096 (Client Services) or via modem phone 1-800-336-9092. You will be issued an Account # (usually within 24 hours) and will be allowed to access

National Videotex Network.

The NVN Atari ST Forum will provide a meeting place for members with common interests to exchange ideas, ask questions and share information. The Atari ST Forum is designed to accomodate person-to-person message interchange, uploading/downloading of data files, "live" talks with guest experts, and much more. The Atari ST Forum is waiting for you!

- Boca Raton, FL

CIS ATARI FORA ANNOUNCES NEW MIDI SYSOP!

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Today, 11/27/92, Ron Luks, contract holder for the Atari Areas on CIS, made the following announcement: I'm pleased to announce that the job of MIDI/Music sysop has been filled by Brad Hill. Brad will begin his duties immediately following this holiday weekend. Until he starts using his new Sysop ID, you may reach him at 75720,540. Please help the rest of the staff in welcoming Brad to our team.

Ron Luks  
Manager, CIS Atari Forums

- El Paso, TX

ONE OF THE ORIGINAL ATARI DEALERS SHIFTING PLATFORMS

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Rumor has it that Jenkins' Computer Store in El Paso Texas, one of the nation's ORIGINAL Atari computer dealer/service center is rumored to have decided to NOT be picking up the Falcon line of computers, and will be involved in closing out their remaining inventory of Atari hardware and software before the end of 1992. Jenkins' reasons are, of course, money. With 95% of their sales now devoted to MS DOS clones, they apparently see no reason to continue stocking computers that in their words "simply don't sell". The failure on Atari's part to supply Falcons for the Christmas Sales Holiday was reportedly cited as the "last straw".

- New York City, NY

SPORTSER & DUAL STANDARD 16.8

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According to our informed sources, your SPORTSTER can become a "USR Courier 16800 HST Dual Standard" modem! The Dual's functions are disabled during the Sportster's normal use. By changing two instructions in the modems register, it will switch over to the "dual standard mode" until you remove power from your modem. Simply include the following instructions in your init string or enter it manually in terminal mode:  
ATGW03c6,22 - ATGW05cd,2f

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=====
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=====

Messages \* NOT EDITED \* for content

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From GEnie's ST RT

Category 1, Topic 20

Message 17            Tue Nov 24, 1992  
DOUG.W [ICD RT]            at 08:22 EST

[from Jeff Williams]

Frank Bell, J.BRENNER1, Wayne Watson, Tom McComb, Oscar Steele, Anna Mason, John Morales: Thank you. Be sure that I'll be back ... maybe sooner than you think. <smile>

=====

Jim Ness: Thanks for the great lead! South Beloit is just a mile or two away from where I live. It would be nice to find something so close to home.

I called Stan Owens and dropped off my resume at his office. We'll see if anything comes of it.

Thanks again! I really appreciate it.

=====

John Trautschold: Thanks for the kind words. I'm happy that I was able to help smooth out your early days on GENIE and that a local boy (Chicago area) has ended up being a popular Atari developer. I can say I knew you before you were rich and famous. <smile>

=====

Darlah: "You were one of the best." Thank you. But to put that into the proper perspective, I consider all the Atari ST Roundtable sysops to be "The Best." So I am proud to have been in such august company.

=====

John King Tarpinian: I am very fond of the RTCs due largely to all the folks like you and so many other folks that I've come to know so well through them. It's been great for me. Good luck and best success with future shows and user group events.

=====

Brain Harvey: Thanks. I feel much more comfortable about taking a leave knowing you and the other sysops are doing such a great job here. Keep up

the good work.

=====

Jason Saffer: Thanks for the suggestion of the 12-step programs. Every time I look through a book store, I check out the psychology, self help, and recovery books and I find the 12-step program is being applied to many areas. I used to attend some ACOA (Adult Children of Alcoholics) meetings and I still have some of those books that detail their 12-step program. I haven't looked at them for some time, but with your suggestion I'll dig them up and give them another look. Thank you.

=====

Joe Meehan: Thanks. I appreciate the thought. I used to work for a large corporation that had similar hiring/promotion policies so I understand. In general, I feel it's a good policy for any business to encourage promotion from within the company whenever possible. It's good for the business and good for the employees.

=====

Jonesy: Please give my best to the Michelle and all the other great folks at MilAtari. I'm sure I'll be up Milwaukee-way one of these days to say "hi" and to see what you guys are up to.

=====

ALL:

In the time since I started this topic, I've had a couple interesting and promising interviews. One in particular is very exciting and I hope to hear from that employer within a few days, hopefully with good news. And even if it doesn't end up being the news I would like to hear, there will be other employers who are dying to find someone like me. It's just a matter of keeping my momentum going, researching the local job market (I'm getting good at this ... I spend a good deal of time in the library each week), following the papers and other sources for opportunity, working the phone, keeping my spirits up, and work, work, work.

I genuinely feel better now than I have in quite some time, I'm relieved to say. I'll be visiting my brother, sister-in-law, niece, and nephew during the Christmas holiday, unless I find a job first <smile>. In either event, it will make for a happy holiday season.

My thanks to Doug Wheeler who has been supplying me with all your kind and thoughtful messages in this topic and the GEmail that many of you have sent. Be assured that I am receiving your messages and I will reply ... even if it may take several days before I get back to you (I've been busy ... honest!)

Happy Thanksgiving! See you around!

- Jeff Williams

-----

About the Falcon....

Category 14, Topic 20  
Message 179 Sat Nov 21, 1992  
M.POCHE [Mick] at 21:36 EST

I agree with Graham @ Quay. Sure, the Falcon could be better, like everything else in the world, but compared to the ST/STE, the Falcon is a major leap forward. Having seen a Falcon, and a mere glimpse of what it can do, I'm totally impressed.

The techo-babble and spec numbers are all interesting and everything, but really don't mean squat as long as the computer does what you want it to do, the way you want to do it. That is exactly why I intend on buying one as soon as they are available. I've seen the graphics that the Falcon is capable of producing, and I was blown away!

It seems to me that the people who have actually seen/used a Falcon are the ones who are impressed, while the people who have been doing all of the belly-aching haven't yet been lucky enough to see how well those poor specs are put to use.

Just my thoughts, not flaming against anyone.

- Mick

-----

Category 14, Topic 20  
Message 180 Sat Nov 21, 1992  
J.TRAUTSCHOL [jtrautschold] at 22:59 EST

Exactly! That's where ST, or Sixteen-Thirty Two, came from - it's an external 16-bit/internal 32-bit system. The TT is a Thirty Two-Thirty Two because it supports a true 32 bit system both externally and internally.

-----

Category 14, Topic 20  
Message 181 Sat Nov 21, 1992  
C.KLIMUSHYN [-Chuck-] at 23:22 EST

Ben, My reply to your post is over in "atari vs. other systems" Cat.18 topic #22.

Mick, No flame taken. My gripe is with the dis-information that Atari chose not to correct. It scares me that things are the same-old, same-old, despite time and money running out for Atari.

Best Regards, -Chuck-

-----

Category 14, Topic 20  
Message 182 Sun Nov 22, 1992  
M.POCHE [Mick] at 05:06 EST

Chuck -

True. While I may think that the Falcon is a great computer, Atari Corp. itself needs some serious work. I am one of the optimists most of the

time, but just how optimistic can one be when things are promised and not delivered on a regular basis? Fool me once, shame on Atari. Fool me twice, shame on me.

Atari has gone bungee jumping, and the Falcon is their cord. It will either snap them back from the bottom, or bust right in the middle while we all watch them go SPLAT!

The ground is coming up fast.....

- Mick

-----

Category 14, Topic 20  
Message 23 Tue Nov 24, 1992  
J.RICHTER [J.RICHTER] at 01:28 EST

ThunderBIRD,

I'm back... and YOUR RIGHT!!! I was at Comdex and for (2)days I touched.. I felt... I saw and HEARD the Falcon... GREAT sound, and compared to other systems (some with CHEAP 24bit cards) only AVERAGE video, color and resolutions were easily bettered on any number of surrounding systems (Although the Falcon outdid everything there with the in-a-window movie thing)!

Most new PC's are based on the 486 running at 11mips (Twice that of the Falcon030) and some FAST video 16/24 bit cards. These NEW "Low End" systems are all 32bit systems ... say it slowly.. Thirty-Two bit MEMORY operations with Local Bus video...

Quotes from Atari Falcon030 Specifications:

System Architecture:

Thats "SYSTEM ARCHITECTURE" not 68030 architecture!!!

Quote:

"BUS: 32-bit data, 32-bit address."

Now wait-a-minute John Townsend: "It's a 16bit data bus, once and for all" Don't get me wrong, its a nice system with sound that can't be matched! but here are the real kickers in my opinion:

1. Mushy 1040 keyboard! WHY oh WHY on a NEW system?? that one REALLY hurts.. sheesh my friends couldn't stop giggling!!
2. The LOOK of Yesterdays HOME systems.. why oh why?? why put a quad-cam 93' Pontiac engine in a 69' Bonneville???
3. \$1400 for a (one piece 4meg, without monitor) home system?? with only 16bit expansion capabilities???
4. Muti-TOS GOOD but still not quite finished (looks to be a few months away to me).
5. After watching the "mini-plug" in action i.e. slip..pop.. fall

out..this machine deserves the RCA option (I agree with the BIRD)

6. After watching the "AT emulation" at work.. hmmmm Black and white Windows 3.1 only!! Not gonna do it, needs more work!

NOTE: In the beginning we were ALL very excited about the Falcon.. Wow for once a true 32bit Atari with Awesome "True Color" video and DSP capabilities!! I was very enthused and PROUD that Atari took the risk and went ALL-THE-WAY!!!

Whats needed:

1. At least 640X480X16bits with a real VGA/SVGA monitor. I'm sorry 320X480 with Multi-Sync can't cut it in todays market!
2. At least replace the 1040 keyboard with the "Mega" units!! even if they Have To use the 1040 case!
3. A Real 32bit data/"Expansion Bus"
4. If Atari GOES with this unit.. lower the price and issue ONLY the 4meg unit with/HD for under \$1000.. and release the REAL 040 system!.. by Summer 93' lesser versions of the 040 will be Apples "MID LEVEL" systems anyway.

This is NOT meant to be negative! The Falcon can do some GREAT things! but the little guy must execute all functions of the computer game BETTER than the big guy... Just to succeed!!

Drake:

No the DSP does NOT compress and decompress on-the-fly .. you need the codec optional chip set for that!

Soul Manager:

Please... Most of these features including the Kodak CD thing will be available on other systems.. and at the SAME price break, and usually with MUCH larger total software bases.. with Expansion Slots and in higher video resolutions and in some cases MORE colors!!

I want my REAL 32bit ATARI system!! the one Advocated and Mis-quoted by folks I thought I could trust.. (at this stage of the game!) I am sorry.. stop trying to tell me less is OK.. I don't need almost as fast.. I thought the falcon030 was going to be a "Barn Burner" You know "Power without the Price"

... The 486SX High-Rez cheapies will make mince-meat outa this system before summer.. You can quote me on this one!! It's like introducing a 16MHZ 386SX system in 1993!! gimmy-a-BREAK! and.. by-the-way... It really sounds like most folks in this area HAVE NOT seen the Dazzling NEW graphics available on some of the NEW 486SX systems! .... Gee.. Sigh... I hate DOS

And PLEASE... don't tell me speed doesn't count.. just watch the NEW Atari Word Processor (With Gorgeous Fonts I might add) as it scrolls slowly down your page!! The ST WAS the Fastest thing out there when we bought it! and we were DARN proud of it.. for just that reason.. Man, it would BLOW the doors of any 8088!! or 8086!!! If you can get TWICE the speed and overall

performance out something 1/2 the cost, isn't this what it's all about!! I  
LOVE MY MEGA4 Keyboard.. sheesh gimi at least as good!!

-----

Category 4, Topic 11

Message 160 Thu Nov 26, 1992

L.LOZO1 at 18:17 EST

Local Bus is not a industry standard there are i think 3 vendors may more by now if you have a local bus motherboard, you "cannot" just put any locan bus video/io card in it, and it all works. In Australia Less than 1% Pc's in use have local bus. Its a pitty that SCSI was not implemented a bit further Now you can Buy Hard disks, Laser printers, Scanners, Network adapters, Ram/Disk packs, Floppy drives all based on SCSI. I think it would have been great if they made Video Cards on Scsi with built in graphics co-pro What about DSP on SCSI? If this all happened System connectivity and products interchange would be far higher? The idea of a true Backplane/Motherboard as really been lost i remember when i was into the first S100 bus computers (good ol' Days) You had a motherboard with connectors and Power supply, nothing else. You also had the CPU on its own card, Ram on another You could also have a choice of processors. Intel 8080, 8080A, Z80 Z80A, Z8000, Motorola 6800, 6802, Signetics 2650. Since IBM took the idea of a s100 type machine but put the processor on the motherboard, industry formed a conspiracy in the idea of the diisposable computer. The industry as a whole do not want us to upgrade our boxes, they make less money. They want us to throw them away. and expect us to buy new ones from them!!! Commodore and the biggest Culprit ATARI purely and simply make their bucks from that policy. Look at the falcon, wheres the expansion slot? And even if they put one in it, the next model atari machine would have a different slot any way! How many ST users have converted to the ibm platform? Forget about software availability for the PC but the PC has a much wider and cheaper upgradability. ATARI still has a lot to learn. Look at Apple you guys from Atari Inc. They have Nubus that still lives on in machines. Atari users over the years have contributed more \$\$\$ to atari than just about any pc user as given to its vendor. And the Atari users knows this. Atari wonder why sales are falling dramatically?? Wake up Atari its 1992 System expandibility and Upgrade are the go.

\*\*\*\*\*

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\*\*\*\*\*

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